

Naval War College Review

Volume 19
Number 4 *April*

Article 5

1966

School of Naval Command and Staff: The Soviet Naval Officer

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Recommended Citation

Shapiro, Sumner (1966) "School of Naval Command and Staff: The Soviet Naval Officer," *Naval War College Review*: Vol. 19 : No. 4 , Article 5.
Available at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review/vol19/iss4/5>

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THE SOVIET NAVAL OFFICER

A research paper written by
Commander Sumner Shapiro, U.S. Navy
School of Naval Command & Staff, 1966

INTRODUCTION

The individual has been and will continue to be the most important factor in winning an armed struggle.¹

This testimonial to the role of the individual in modern naval operations appeared in the lead article of the July 1964 issue of *Morskoy Sbornik* (Naval Digest), the monthly professional journal published by the Soviet Navy. The article, entitled "The Mighty Navy of a Socialist Power," was written to commemorate Soviet Navy Day 1964. It dealt at great length with the pivotal role of key naval personnel—and the naval commander in particular—in properly executing assigned tasks and thereby determining the outcome of any trial to which units of the Soviet Navy might be put. The point was clearly made that the high degree of mechanization and automation found in the navy today has not downgraded the role of the individual; rather, it has generated a requirement for even more highly qualified officers, responsible and capable of making timely and accurate decisions under the most complex situations.

This article is not unique; similar articles are appearing in *Morskoy Sbornik*, and other instruments of the Soviet military press, with increased frequency. They have a common theme, as expressed by a general officer of the Naval Air Arm:

However great the destructive power of weapons, man remains the decisive factor in modern war. Soviet military science considers man and equipment as a dialectical unit, interdependent and conditioned. Complex equipment

and new means of conducting military operations offer immeasurably greater demands on the moral fortitude, physical hardening, training, discipline and organization of personnel. Commanders, staffs and political organizations should implement all measures, so that our ships and units are in constant readiness to execute their missions, the servicemen are always vigilant, and the training and education of personnel are perfected day by day.²

Frequently, such articles make reference to independent operations of submarines, conducted at great distances from their home bases, and to long-range overwater flights by units of the Naval Air Arm. Almost without exception, they dwell on the need to develop among naval personnel of such units—the officers in particular—the individual political, professional and personal qualities required to ensure the successful accomplishment of assigned missions. Quite often, these articles are of a critical nature, bringing to light certain personnel problem areas. Many of them are written by flag officers of the Soviet Navy, therefore presumably reflecting official policy. Others—unsigned lead articles or editorials, or those written by more junior officers—are certainly sanctioned by the navy, and they are probably equally authoritative and indicative of the personnel situation in the fleet.

This is not to suggest that all personnel problems in the Soviet Navy are likely to be aired in the pages of *Morskoy Sbornik*; nor is there reason to believe that the coverage would be entirely objective in all cases. However, the discussions of personnel matters found in this publication do serve to bring certain problem areas to the surface, and they do provide some insight into the official Soviet Navy assessment of professional competence, political reliability and personal behavior among Soviet naval officers.

With this in mind, the writer has reviewed issues of *Morskoy Sbornik* dating from mid-1963 through 1965, relatively confident that any discussions of personnel matters in the Soviet Navy—of current interest and likely to appear in open-source material—would be found in these issues. Using this as a foundation, the writer has attempted to evaluate the Soviet naval officer, and to assess the impact of his political, professional and personal strong points and shortcomings on the effectiveness of the Soviet Navy in peace and war.

FOOTNOTES

Introduction

1. "The Mighty Navy of a Socialist Power," *Morskoy Sbornik*, July 1964, p. 5.

2. N.A. Sbytov, "The Character and Concepts of a Worldwide Nuclear Rocket War," *Morskoy Sbornik*, March 1964, p. 15.

CHAPTER I

THE NAVAL OFFICER CORPS

The Party and the Government continuously concern themselves with the selection, preparation and training of officer personnel, who constitute the fundamental skeleton of our Armed Forces, who are the authors of our military might and the bearers of our glorious military traditions.¹

The Development of the Soviet Naval Officer Corps. The Communist Party and the Soviet Government have not always had such a high opinion of officers, particularly those of the navy. In fact, the Bolsheviks came to power over the corpses of the Tsarist Navy officer corps, destroying discipline in the navy in order to further the cause of the October Revolution in 1917. Four years later, what remained of the navy turned on the Bolsheviks themselves, with the revolt of the sailors at Kronstadt, and the political reliability of the navy remained in question for several years thereafter. Probably because of the revolutionary fervor found in the navy—glorified by the Bolsheviks in 1905 and 1917, but damned when it turned against them in 1921—political commissars were retained in the navy long after they had been abolished in the army.

Thus, it was the mid-1930's before a relatively independent Soviet Navy officer corps was permitted to come into its own. Its existence was short-lived, however, since it shared the same fate as the army in the Great Purges of 1937-38, which also signaled the return of military commissars. About one-half of the total officer strength of the Soviet Armed Forces was wiped out in these purges. Among the estimated 35,000 victims were a proportionate number of senior naval officers, including the Commander in Chief of the Navy and the Commanders of the Northern, Baltic and Black Sea Fleets. There was little left on which to build a corps of naval officers for the coming war.

Even during World War II, not much was done to construct what might truly be called a naval officer corps. Much of the Soviet Navy was fighting ashore; that which remained at sea was subjected to a rigid defensive doctrine imposed by the

High Command, a factor which stifled initiative and greatly limited possibilities for developing leadership and professionalism. To the Soviets, it was an army show, and there were no Zhukovs, Konevs or Timoshenkos emerging from the naval operations of the war. However, the war did produce a crop of naval officers with up to four years combat experience, albeit of very limited naval application. These officers were well screened in the course of postwar demobilizations, and only the best qualified and most reliable among them were retained on active duty.²

Most of these officers are now quite senior, of course, and they are rapidly being replaced by the postwar generation of officers. This is the generation which is of greatest importance to both the Soviets and to a potential enemy. They are the officers who now command virtually all of the ships of the Soviet Navy, and who will command the fleets and flotillas in the not-too-distant future.

The Postwar Generation of Naval Officers. In principle, every Soviet citizen is eligible to become an officer in the Soviet Navy. In practice, this is far from true. Since World War II, the vast majority of officer candidates for the navy have been drawn from the Nakhimov Schools, which offer specialized naval preparatory training at the primary and secondary school level. Instituted during the war, these schools were ostensibly intended to provide educational opportunities for the orphans of war heroes. In actual fact, they have had the effect of making naval officer status almost totally inaccessible to the real proletariat, and they have provided the base for the reestablishment of the officer caste which was destroyed during the revolution. Although each class entering these preparatory schools includes a few sons of workers, active duty petty officers and enlisted war heroes—a fact which receives considerable attention in the Soviet press—all others are the sons of Party and Government leaders and active duty and retired naval officers. This makes for a rather inbred officer corps, a factor which the Soviets appear to consider advantageous. As expressed by the admiral commanding one of these schools, it is in the family that military and naval traditions can best be preserved.³

Those graduates of the Nakhimov Schools who aspire to follow a career in the navy can continue their education at one of the Higher Naval Schools. Theoretically, entrance to the Higher Naval Schools, which offer a university level education, is open to all Nakhimov School graduates, enlisted personnel and qualified

civilians.⁴ It is estimated that only one out of eight candidates is accepted for admission, and the attrition rate during the four-year course is on the order of fifty percent. Products of the Nakhimov Schools, who have had the advantage of extensive specialized preparation, make up a very large percentage of the cadets who successfully complete the course of instruction and receive commissions in the navy.⁵

The young graduate of the Higher Naval School, embarking on his career as a commissioned officer in the Soviet Navy, joins an elite group within the Soviet society. The weeding-out process of the postwar demobilizations, coupled with the inbreeding engendered by the Nakhimov School system, has resulted in the gradual conversion of the Soviet Navy officer corps into a virtual caste which enjoys both social and economic advantage. Like other elite groups within the "classless" society, the naval officer corps is made up largely of Great Russians, in contradistinction to the many other national groups represented in the Soviet Union. Allegedly, this has not resulted from any discriminatory practice on the part of the Soviet regime, but is simply due to the fact that this is by far the largest national group in the U.S.S.R., representing over half of the total population, and is generally better educated than the rest. Regardless of the reason, the fact remains that the percentage of Great Russians occupying positions of responsibility and authority in the navy is increasing. The result is a very exclusive power group which tends to view as culturally inferior the large Asiatic population of the Soviet Union, and which in turn is looked down on and is generally disliked by other peoples, notably those in the Baltic States and the Caucasus.⁶

As elite as the naval officer corps may be, there is still considerable class distinction within it. In many ways, the stratification of the entire Soviet social structure carries over into the navy, and the officer who comes from one of the elite groups is often shown preferential treatment with respect to promotion and assignment to the more promising billets. For the officer who comes from the working class, or is up from the ranks, such social barriers are not insurmountable, but they can slow his professional progress significantly. National origin, party affiliation and educational background are other factors bearing on an officer's social acceptance.

Even more marked, however, are the lines of class distinction which are drawn on the basis of rank. The gulf between junior and senior officers in the Soviet Navy is broad—broader than that

existing in most Western navies. Except for the favored few, Soviet junior officers simply do not mix with their seniors. Moreover, rank in the Soviet Navy hath very considerable privileges, which are translated into very significant economic and social advantages. In short, as unsocialistic as it may sound, the inducements to succeed in the Soviet Navy are largely materialistic, and the urge to advance is strong and widespread, particularly among the officers of the postwar generation.⁷

Officer Evaluation and Advancement. According to a former Soviet naval officer, four major factors influence an officer's advancement. The first of these is the requirement to gain the confidence of one's immediate superior, upon whose recommendation the officer's selection for future assignment and promotion depends. This situation, the former officer maintains, leads to the limits of obsequiousness. Secondly, there is the matter of party membership, without which an officer has no hope of advancement to the senior grades. Recognizing this, all ambitious officers strive for admission as full or candidate members, the most forward-looking taking the first steps while they are still naval cadets. This they do by joining the Komsomol (Young Communist League), whose recommendation is vital for admittance to the party. Thirdly, there is the matter of political activity, which this former Soviet naval officer claims has greater bearing on an officer's advancement than his professional competence. It is his view that every ambitious officer strives for good relations with the political organizations, but that some stake everything on such activity, even neglecting their military duties in order to concentrate on political work. Finally, he cites marriage to the daughter of a high-ranking officer as the most certain means of getting ahead in the Soviet Navy. He makes no claim that such a marriage is requisite to success, but that it can be of considerable assistance—party membership may be easier to attain, and the more promising assignments and accompanying promotions are more apt to be forthcoming. On the other hand, the officer who is so unfortunate as to have married someone who does not meet with the approval of his military and political superiors, or whose personal life is otherwise subject to question, is almost certain to find the road to further advancement blocked. Such an officer—or for that matter, any officer who fails to conform—learns early in his career that his chances of success in the navy are severely limited. Some of these officers resign from the navy, others are involuntarily released from active duty (usually on the pretext of a routine reduction in force), and a few manage to remain in the service until they reach the age of about 45 and are retired at a junior rank with a modest pension.⁸

One might question the views of this former Soviet naval officer, on the basis that, as a defector, he himself may well have been such a nonconformist and would therefore be prejudiced. However, there is considerable evidence from other sources—including the published revelations of Colonel Oleg Penkovskiy—to support these claims of personal and political influence in the Soviet Armed Forces.⁹ That such favoritism does exist—in proportions serious enough to have gained official recognition—may be seen in the highly placed expressions of concern appearing in the Soviet military press. One such plaint was registered by the Head of the Main Political Directorate of the Navy, who cautioned that officer assignments must be made on the basis of professional qualifications, and not "by reason of friendly attitude, personal connections and acquaintance from earlier duty together." Apparently, such favoritism is forcing other officers into early resignations, since Admiral Grishanov also pointed out that while it is necessary to be considerate of people who have given the best years of their lives to the service, this must not be permitted to block the advancement of young and promising officers. Something must be very wrong, he noted, when officers such as these terminate their service at an early age.¹⁰

Similar concern was also expressed by the Head of the Main Personnel Directorate of the Ministry of Defense. Like the admiral, General Gusakovskiy pointed out that officer assignments must be based on a thorough examination of the officers' records, considering the evaluations of their immediate superiors and cognizant political organizations, and taking into account all aspects of their professional, political and personal qualifications. He noted, however, that officer evaluations leave much to be desired. In some cases, the evaluations reflect a personal relationship between the reporting officer and his subordinate, with the result that shortcomings are overlooked. In other cases, the evaluations are based on limited and superficial observation, and are therefore filled with broad and meaningless phrases which provide little concrete information about the officer who is the subject of the report. What is needed, the general outlines, is an "exact, sound testimonial of the political, professional and moral qualities" of the officer, not only indicating his strong points, but also containing a "deep and all-inclusive evaluation of his negative professional and personal traits."¹¹

In some respects, Soviet Navy authorities submit such an evaluation report on the officer corps as a whole. They accomplish

this is as part of the continuing, large-scale campaign to improve combat readiness and political reliability in the navy. As a vehicle, they frequently use the professional journal, *Morskoy Sbornik*, publicly airing in it a variety of the navy's personnel problems. From such critical discussions, it is possible to draw a credible evaluation of the Soviet naval officer—his political, professional and personal qualities—his strong points and shortcomings.

FOOTNOTES

Chapter I

1. "Nesokrushimyy strazh mira i sotsializma" (Invincible Guardian of Peace and Socialism), *Morskoy Sbornik*, February 1965, p. 8. (Cited hereafter as "Invincible Guardian.")

2. M.G. Saunders, ed., *The Soviet Navy* (New York: Praeger, 1958), p. 82-104; B.H. Liddell-Hart, *The Red Army* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1956), p. 69, 395.

3. Saunders, ed., p. 132.

4. Candidates must have a secondary school education, be between 17 and 23 years of age at entrance, and cannot be married. Cadets who attend Frunze Higher Naval School (located at the site of the former Imperial Naval School in Leningrad) receive instruction which is designed primarily to prepare them to be deck officers and watchstanders. Upon graduation, they are commissioned as unrestricted line officers in the surface and submarine forces. Naval cadets who are to pursue specialized careers (in engineering fields, naval aviation, coastal artillery and naval infantry) receive their education at several other Higher Naval Schools located throughout the Soviet Union.

5. It is possible for an enlisted man to come up from the ranks, but the average sailor has little hope of ever attaining commissioned status. The exceptions are certain technicians who receive officer training at special Naval Officer Schools; their promotion opportunities, however, are generally quite limited. It is believed that all graduates of the Higher Naval Schools are currently being commissioned as lieutenants; a junior lieutenant rank exists, but it is roughly equivalent to that of "passed" midshipman in other navies and apparently is not in use at present. (See Appendix I for additional information on Soviet Navy ranks.)

6. Louis B. Ely, *The Red Army Today* (Harrisburg, Pa.: Military Service Publishing Co., 1949), p. 109-113. There appear to be very few officers in the Soviet Navy today from outside the Slavic group (i.e., Great Russians, Byelorussians and Ukrainians), and these usually seem to be academicians and technicians, rather

than line officers. In screening *Morskoy Sbornik* and other Soviet military publications, it was noted that Russian names were most evident, by far, among the naval officers who authored the articles or were cited in them. This could be misleading, however, since many Soviets adopt Russian names for professional reasons.

7. L. Predtechevskiy, "Aspects of the Ethical Make-up of the Soviet Naval Officer," *Bulletin* (Munich: Institute for the Study of the U.S.S.R.), April 1959, p. 23.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 17-18.

9. Oleg Penkovskiy, *The Penkovskiy Papers* (New York: Doubleday, 1965), v.p.

10. V.M. Grishanov, "Reshayushchee zveno raboty" (Decisive Work Link), *Morskoy Sbornik*, June 1965, p. 9-12.

11. I. Gusakovskiy, "Attestovanie ofitserского sostava" (Evaluation of the Officer Corps), *Kommunist Vooruzhennykh Sil* (Communist of the Armed Forces), September 1965, p. 9-10.

CHAPTER II

THE POLITICAL QUALITIES OF THE SOVIET NAVAL OFFICER

The structural principle on which the Soviet Armed Forces are based, and which has been tested by circumstances—that of one-man management—has been strengthened, and is being strengthened, on the Party basis. This principle makes it the duty of every commander to approach his job from the Party and State viewpoint; to firmly and responsibly implement the Party's policy; and to base all of his activities on the Party and Komsomol organizations.¹

Communist Party Control in the Navy. In the Soviet military press, much is made of this concept called "one-man management" or "single command." In simplest terms, this means that within a given unit, military and political leadership is exercised by one person—the military commander. As outlined in Soviet Armed Forces regulations, the unit commander is the "one-man manager" and is personally responsible to the Communist Party and to the Soviet Government for the military and political training, the combat readiness, and the political-moral condition of his unit. In short, he is the man who is charged with ultimate responsibility for all material and personnel matters within the unit he commands.²

This is not a new concept in the Soviet Armed Forces, but it is currently receiving considerable high-level attention. The concept has been in effect, in one form or another, ever since the early days of World War II, when the dual command system was seen to be operationally unworkable and was abolished. Under the dual command system, a military commissar was assigned at each level of command, to ensure political integrity. He ranked with the military commander and frequently overrode the latter's decisions in purely military matters. The commissar was replaced by the "zampolit" (deputy commander for political affairs), who continues to exist today, and who functions much like a combined chaplain and welfare and recreation officer, except that his range of interest is much broader, extending from the ideological indoctrination of officer and enlisted personnel to the organization and

supervision of their off-duty activities.³ While the "zampolit" is militarily and administratively subordinate to the unit commander, he has available to him a parallel and entirely separate chain of command within the Political Administration of the Armed Forces. Needless to say, the opportunity which this gives him to report on his military contemporaries and seniors is a constant source of irritation to the regular officers. It is no less an irritant, however, than other factors which have characterized many "zampolits" in the past. For one thing, other officers are apt to consider the "zampolit" to be something of a parasite, not fulfilling a useful function in the organization. They also tend to look down on the "zampolit" as culturally and professionally inferior, since he is often selected and promoted solely on the basis of his political reliability. Most galling of all to the regular officers, however, are the instances when the "zampolit" oversteps his authority and attempts to exert his influence in purely military matters.

Within very recent years, steps have been taken to improve the image of the "zampolit." Instead of being drawn directly from civilian life, he is now recruited from among personnel of the Armed Forces who have demonstrated promise as party activists. He is sent to a special training school, where he receives extensive preparation for his primary mission of political enlightenment, but where he is schooled thoroughly in military matters as well. This foundation in military training, continued when he joins an operational unit, makes it possible for him to fulfill a military function when required. The "zampolit" on a major naval combatant, for example, is third in command and is required to qualify as an underway watch officer. There are even reported instances when former "zampolits" have qualified and succeeded to command.⁴

While the image of the "zampolit" may have improved, his primary role in the organization has not changed. He still has his separate channel of communications, and he still manages to exert considerable influence in the day-to-day operations of the unit. However, he is less apt now to challenge the authority of the commander, and in this respect the current concept of one-man management is most significant. This does not mean that there has been any relaxation of party control in the Armed Forces. It does mean, however, that party control is being exercised, more and more, through the commander, who now has both the responsibility and the authority in military and political matters. This trend is defined by Soviet Navy

authorities as a "strengthening of the one-man management concept," without which, they maintain, improved combat readiness is unthinkable. They take care to point out, however, that this concept must be built "on the party basis," with the commander serving as the representative of the party and as the leader in furthering party interests. It is the duty of every commander to approach his job from the party and State viewpoint, and to rely on the party and Komsomol (Young Communist League) organizations for advice and assistance in all of his undertakings.⁵

Soviet Navy leaders maintain that the one-man management concept is working well—"that experience shows that when there is a continuing effort to strengthen the single-command concept, and the commander's authority is supported, he can carry out all assignments given him." In order to strengthen this concept, they point out, it is necessary to train and cultivate those officers who will fulfill their obligations conscientiously.⁶ This is a rather oblique way of saying that the fate of the one-man management concept—which relies on the party for its continued existence—hinges on the ability of the officer corps to guarantee that the present level of party control in the navy will be maintained, and that personnel of the navy will remain loyal to the regime and devoted to the principles of communism.

Loyalty to the Regime. It is unlikely that the Central Committee of the Communist Party would have even considered strengthening the one-man management concept, thereby bolstering the authority of the military commander, without the assured loyalty of the officer corps. This does not mean that there are no cases of disloyalty or defection among officers of the Armed Forces, but it does mean that those in authority have reason to feel that this is not a serious problem.⁷

This confidence is probably based in part on the belief that the postwar demobilizations have weeded out most of the political "risks" of the wartime and immediate postwar periods; further, that since the war, it has been possible to build the officer corps on a solid party basis, over ninety percent of the officers now being members of the party or Komsomol.⁸ Of no less importance is the fact that, since Stalin's death, the economic and social advantages afforded the officer corps have increased steadily, and there has been far less reason for them to become disaffected.

However, party membership is no guarantee of loyalty to the regime, and people do have a way of becoming disaffected, as was recently demonstrated by the much-publicized Penkovskiy case. In recognition of these factors, and spurred on by cases of disaffection such as this one, Soviet Navy authorities are demanding that even greater attention be paid to the ideological education of personnel, showing particular concern for the crews of submarines and aircraft, whose independent operations take them far from Soviet shores, even in peacetime. Typical of this concern was the recent warning of the Commander in Chief of the Navy:

The most important conditions for improving the military might of the Navy are the political hardening of naval personnel, their ardent ideological conviction and loyalty to the affairs of communism, the unbending battle against the ideological subversion of the imperialists, against political unconcern, complacency and gullibility. Commanders and political organizations, Party and Komsomol organizations, must raise even higher the level of ideological-political activity on ships and in units, carefully indoctrinating the hardened champions in the high ideals of communism. Let the principles of the Code of the Builder of Communism be the sacred commandment of all men of our Red Banner Fleets, without exception.⁹

In Soviet eyes, the ideological subversion to which Admiral Gorshkov made reference may take several forms, and naval personnel may be exposed to it in a number of ways. In its most serious form, it implies subversion in the classic sense; i.e., a Soviet defects or is induced to engage in espionage for a foreign power. However, it can also involve a general disaffection with the regime or complacency about party or service responsibilities, either of which might lead to decreased efficiency or laxity with regard to security matters. The chances of naval personnel being exposed to such subversive efforts, in the Soviet view, have risen with the greatly increased opportunities for contact with the West. Through such contact, naval personnel (along with the rest of the Soviet population) are learning more and more about the world beyond the Soviet borders.¹⁰ This greatly increases the possibilities of inconsistencies in Soviet domestic and foreign policy (as well as errors and omissions in internal propaganda) being brought to light. To counteract this, commanders and political organizations in the navy are being called upon to take preventive measures:

Popularization of the oath of enlistment and service regulations, explaining the decisions of the Party and Government relative to domestic and international problems, and instilling in the personnel a sense of abhorrence toward imperialists, are activities which require a great deal of application and skill.¹¹

The main purpose of such indoctrination, with its emphasis on the provisions of the oath and regulations, is to forestall disaffection toward the regime, which might in turn lead to subversion or defection. In effect, it is a two-pronged attack: if the ideological indoctrination fails to erase any doubts about the correctness of the party's tenets and actions, then there are the cold unyielding requirements of the oath and regulations to bind the men to the regime. The military oath, to which both officers and men attest, is a very demanding document which is administered with great ceremony, after extensive instruction in its principles and meaning. It is interesting in that it makes no mention of the Communist Party, but declares allegiance only to "my People, my Soviet Motherland, and the Soviet Government."¹² This emphasis on national patriotism is probably the best indication of where the true and unswerving loyalty of the Soviet naval officer lies. As was demonstrated in the early days of World War II, when it became "The Great Patriotic War," it is national patriotism, rather than devotion to the party, which binds the Soviet citizen to the regime.

Devotion to the Principles of Communism. To the party, patriotism is not sufficient; there must also be devotion to the party and to the principles of communism. The goal of present efforts to strengthen the one-man management concept, therefore, is to develop an officer corps which, in Soviet parlance, is "politically and operationally mature." The terminology is particularly interesting, in that the context in which it is used implies a broad range of desired qualities. An "operationally mature" officer, it would seem, is more than professionally knowledgeable and technically competent; he also has a capacity for seizing the initiative and taking timely, accurate and decisive action in the face of difficult and complex situations. A "politically mature" officer would not only be patriotic, but would also be devoted to the party and would be a "moral" person; i.e., he would adhere to an officially stipulated set of values in both his service and personal life. Equally important, he would demonstrate a personal interest in the "political-moral" condition of his subordinates, actively participating in their ideological

indoctrination and serving as a good example of "communist morality" at all times.¹³

The extent to which an officer achieves "political maturity" might be indicated by his "moral profile." This is what the party expects of him. In effect, it constitutes his political evaluation report. The qualities which go to make up an officer's "moral profile" were outlined in a *Morskoy Sbornik* editorial. As interesting as the qualities themselves was the order in which they were listed: devotion to the party, professional knowledge, selfless labor, boldness, disciplined conduct, honesty, humility, and readiness to sacrifice all in the interest of the Motherland. (Note that devotion to the party comes first, and patriotism brings up the rear!)

It was noted in this editorial that the majority of officers in the fleet successfully fulfill the requirements of this "moral profile;" however, there are still those who "have not been converted, who still suffer from a lack of humility and self-criticism, who tolerate laxity, carelessness and loafing, who substitute generalities and ringing phrases for thoughtful organizational efforts."¹⁴ The Commander in Chief of the Navy, in his VE-Day anniversary announcement, dealt with these same shortcomings, using some quaint terms to describe them:

The Party demands, in both big and small matters, that a relentless battle be waged against redtape-ism and formalism, window-dressing and windbag-ism. In Fleet training, one must not be reconciled with oversimplified facts, indifference toward connivance and shortcomings. We shall apply all our strength . . . to achieve the unswerving fulfillment of assumed obligations, raise personal responsibility for the quality of combat readiness, eliminate all shortcomings which are uncovered.¹⁵

Admiral Gorshkov's remarks suggest that the navy has yet to develop among all of its officers the deep sense of personal responsibility and self-discipline which are essential ingredients of leadership, particularly for command at sea. In almost any other navy, these would be considered professional shortcomings; in the Soviet Navy, they are more apt to be viewed as political deficiencies—a lack of "political maturity." This connotation extends to virtually every aspect of Soviet Navy life—on duty and

off—so that the naval officer, in most instances, answers to both the navy and the party for any shortcoming.

From the standpoint of the party, many such shortcomings would probably be classified as demonstrating a lack of devotion to the party, and to the principles of communism. Included in this category would be any deficiency in the officer's personal life, as well as any failure to live up to orders and regulations, or to condone such failings in his subordinates. Most derelict politically are officers who set a poor example for their juniors. The regulations are quite specific in this regard:

The commander must serve as an example of courage and fortitude, irreproachable conduct, exact fulfillment of laws, the military oath, and the demands of military regulations and orders.¹⁶

While the term commander is used, it should be noted that this chapter of the regulations deals with the responsibilities of immediate superiors; in effect, anyone in authority is expected to set a good example for his subordinates. This point receives considerable attention in the Soviet military press, and numerous cases are cited of officers who have been demanding of subordinates, but have failed to measure up themselves.

Another area in which any shortcomings are viewed as extremely serious, and in which the party has a vital interest, is that of security. The Soviet regime has always been most sensitive about security matters, defining as military and government secrets virtually any information which might be of possible use to an enemy. The oath of enlistment and the various service regulations are specific about the serviceman's responsibilities for safeguarding such secrets, and there are constant reminders to be vigilant and avoid their accidental disclosure. Officers are frequently cautioned to be alert, taking care not to underestimate the ability of an enemy to take advantage of any breach of security. Despite the constant reminders, there are still cases of carelessness, complacency and thoughtlessness—documents are lost, and military secrets are disclosed in correspondence and telephone conversations. Particularly dangerous, it is noted, are the "tattlers who love to boast of their knowledge to friends and even to ordinary acquaintances." ¹⁷

It seems unlikely that serious breaches of security are widespread among officer personnel; the average Soviet naval officer

is well indoctrinated in security matters and is probably quite conscientious about safeguarding sensitive information. If he has a failing in this regard, it is probably with respect to the indoctrination of his subordinates. This would seem to be indicated by several articles in the military press, calling on officers to pay more attention to instilling in the men greater political vigilance and responsibility for safeguarding government and military secrets.¹⁸

From the standpoint of the party, this failure to play an active role in the indoctrination of subordinates is one of the Soviet naval officer's most serious political deficiencies. The average regular officer (i.e., nonpolitical type) would probably prefer to confine his activities to those of a purely professional nature, leaving the ideological indoctrination to the political organizations entirely. He may well begrudge the time and effort which he and his men are required to devote to political activities, feeling that they could more profitably be applied to perfecting their professional skills. The party can not accept such an apolitical attitude among the regular officers of the navy, not if the concept of one-man management is to flourish. In the party's eyes, such an attitude could lead to diminished political awareness throughout the navy, to a reduction in party influence and control, and possibly to disaffection with the regime as a whole.¹⁹

Therefore, commanders are constantly reminded of their political responsibilities and of the role which the party and Komsomol organizations are expected to play in the administration of the unit. The members of these organizations have a very special responsibility in this regard. They are the officially recognized guardians of "political morality" among all service personnel. It is their task to assist the commander in maintaining order, demonstrating a sense of responsibility for the actions of their shipmates and the honor of their ship or unit. The commander, in turn, is expected to seek their advice and assistance in virtually all matters.²⁰

From the tenor of articles dealing with the expected relationship between the commander and the political organizations, in the daily routine of an operating unit, it is obvious that not all regular officers measure up to party standards. Pains are taken to point out that the best officers understand clearly the great importance of political education, in order to achieve good results in mastering weapons and combat equipment, and in strengthening military discipline. Such officers, it is noted, associate themselves closely

with the party and Komsomol organizations within the unit, relying on them in resolving problems of combat readiness, asking their advice with regard to education and training, and listening carefully to their opinions.²¹ Officers are further reminded that, in order to offset any negligence at all, they must first improve party-political activity within the unit, making it more workable and effective, and ensuring that it encompasses literally every aspect of duty and life aboard ship.²²

While not all regular officers would appear to support actively this all-encompassing role of the political organizations, it is extremely unlikely that any of them would openly contest it. As noted earlier, patriotism and professional competence are not enough to ensure a successful career in the Soviet Navy; devotion to the party and to the principles of communism is also necessary and, in fact, probably carries more weight in determining an officer's advancement potential, than either or both of the other factors. Like every other sector of Soviet society, the party permeates all facets of navy life, ascribing to every attitude and action—whether on duty or off—a political connotation. This can make life quite difficult for the Soviet naval officer. Not only is he open to the close scrutiny of the party at all times, but he must also answer to the party for any apparent shortcomings in his professional and personal life.

This high degree of party influence and control in the Soviet Navy, as well as the manner in which political-ideological significance is attached to literally all aspects of the officer's service and personal life, also complicates the task of evaluating the Soviet naval officer. It sometimes becomes extremely difficult to draw a line between political qualities and those which are normally considered professional and personal. The first attempt at drawing such a line has been made in this chapter, which has dealt primarily with the Soviet naval officer's loyalty to the regime and his devotion to the principles of communism. Hopefully, a minimum of political influence will find its way into the two chapters that follow, clouding the attempt to evaluate his professional and personal qualities.

FOOTNOTES

Chapter II

1. "Zheleznaya voinskaya distsiplina-vazhneyshee uslovie vysokoy boevoy gotovnosti" (Iron Military Discipline--the Most Important Requisite for a High Level of Combat Readiness), *Morskoy Sbornik*, March 1965, p. 5. (Cited hereafter as "Iron Military Discipline. ")

2. U.S.S.R. Ministry of Defense, *Ustav Vnutrenney Sluzhby Vooruzhennykh Sil Soyuza S.S.R.* (Internal Regulations of the Armed Forces of the U.S.S.R.), (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1965), arts. 48, 49, p. 24-25. (Cited hereafter as *U.S.S.R. Internal Regulations.*)

3. The "zampolit" has an interest in security matters, but primary responsibility for this and counterintelligence within the Armed Forces belongs to the K.G.B. (State Security Committee), whose agents frequently recruit or blackmail informants from among personnel in the ranks.

4. F.B. Semashkevich, "Podgotovka starshego pomoshchnika (pomoshchnika) komandira korablya" (The Training of the Senior Assistant [Assistant] to the Ship's Commander), *Morskoy Sbornik*, October 1964, p. 54. Major combatants have both a "starpom" (senior assistant to the commanding officer) who is second in command, and a "zampolit." Minor combatants have only a "pomoshchuik" (assistant), who also functions as political officer, usually assisted by an enlisted "politruk" (political leader).

5. Grishanov, p. 15-16; "Iron Military Discipline," p. 5; "Ne uspoikaivat'sya na dostignutom, dobivat'sya novykh uspekhnov!" (Do Not Be Content with What Has Been Achieved, Strive for New Successes!), *Morskoy Sbornik*, January 1965, p. 6. (Cited hereafter as "Do Not Be Content".) Article 49 of the Armed Forces regulations deals with the relationship between the commander and the political organizations within his unit, calling on him to "rely in his activities on the party and Komsomol organizations, and to use in full measure their influence for the successful fulfillment of tasks confronting the unit." This Article also requires the commander to "take into consideration the opinions of his

subordinates" in all aspects of his duties, including the selection, assignment and evaluation of officers. It goes without saying that the opinion of his political assistant would be among those solicited.

6. Grishanov, *op cit.*

7. The writer has yet to witness any official Soviet recognition of disloyalty and/or defection of Soviet citizens on ideological grounds; rather, such cases have been attributed to some form of personal immorality, Colonel Penkovskiy being a recent case in point. It is the opinion of the writer that there is a thread of truth in most such Soviet claims.

8. "Pod flagom sovetsskoy otchizny" (Under the Flag of the Soviet Fatherland), *Morskoy Sbornik*, July 1965, p. 11. (Cited hereafter as "Under the Flag.") By comparison, less than four percent of the Soviet population are party members, and perhaps four or five times as many belong to the Komsomol. However, there is greater motivation (and opportunity) for members of the Armed Forces to join these organizations, than for the average Soviet citizen.

9. S.G. Gorshkov, "Pochetnie nagrady rodiny obyazyvayut" (Honor Awards of the Motherland Impose a Responsibility), *Morskoy Sbornik*, June 1965, p. 7. This article commemorated the 20th Anniversary of VE-Day, when the Order of the Red Banner was belatedly awarded to all four Fleets of the Soviet Navy for their participation in "The Great Patriotic War."

10. Western radio broadcasts (including Voice of America) are usually no longer jammed, and there has been a great increase in the amount and variety of Western literature, films and exhibits permitted to enter the U.S.S.R. Soviet citizens are showing less reluctance about engaging Western tourists in conversation. Soviet delegations and even selected tour groups are visiting abroad, the merchant marine is calling at ports throughout the world, and naval visits have been made to several Western countries.

11. A.I. Petelin, "Contemporary Requirements in the Indoctrination of Service Personnel," *Morskoy Sbornik*, July 1964, p. 44.

12. U.S.S.R. *Internal Regulations*, p. 207. The oath, translated in its entirety, appears in Appendix II.

13. A Submarine Force admiral notes that "political and operational maturity" is particularly important in the case of submariners, since the nature of their mission necessitates operations by single units, away from all bases and other elements of the fleet, for extended periods. (Petelin, p. 44.)

14. "Iron Military Discipline," v.p.

15. Gorshkov, p. 7.

16. *U.S.S.R. Internal Regulations*, art. 54, p. 27.

17. P.I. Vyrelkin, "Personal Responsibility of Officers for Performance of Assigned Tasks," *Morskoy Sbornik*, December 1963, p. 7.

18. "Do Not Be Content," p. 6.

19. The responsibility for the political education of subordinates, both through instruction and by personal example, is spelled out quite clearly in both the Internal Regulations and the Disciplinary Regulations of the Armed Forces. It is also the subject of frequent discussions in the military press, emphasizing its particular importance in the case of submarine and naval aircraft crews. (*U.S.S.R. Internal Regulations*, art. 54, p. 25; U.S.S.R. Ministry of Defense, *Disziplinarnyy Ustav Vooruzhennykh Sil Soyuza S.S.R.* [Disciplinary Regulations of the Armed Forces of the U.S.S.R.], [Moscow: Voenizdat, 1965], art. 5, p. 8. [Cited hereafter as *U.S.S.R. Disciplinary Regulations*.])

20. "Iron Military Discipline," p. 5.

21. G.I. Karnavin, "Submarine Commanding Officers as Organizers and Educators," *Morskoy Sbornik*, March 1964, p. 29. Two submarine commanding officers were cited in this article as being among the best in the fleet. Both graduated with honors from a university course offering evening courses in Marxism-Leninism. Both were members of the Communist Party.

22. "Each Sea Voyage Should be More Fully Utilized for Combat Training," *Morskoy Sbornik*, March 1964, p. 24.

CHAPTER III

THE PROFESSIONAL QUALITIES OF THE SOVIET NAVAL OFFICER

In connection with the professional state, it is necessary to show comprehensively: performance of assigned duties by the officer during the reporting period; personal preparation; professional experience; administrative abilities; personal behavior; skill in training and educating subordinates and in working at perfecting his own military, political and technical knowledge; participation in Party-political activities; physical condition; and those other factors which determine the abilities and inclinations of the officer being evaluated.¹

Soviet Criteria for Measuring Professionalism. Defining the qualities which constitute professionalism in the naval officer is difficult under the best of conditions; it becomes almost impossible when the picture is clouded by political or ideological considerations, as is the case in the Soviet Navy. A good example of this beclouding is to be found in the quotation above, which comes from an article written by the Head of the Main Personnel Directorate of the Ministry of Defense, wherein the criteria for evaluating the professional capabilities of an officer were defined. It is worth noting that, in addition to the criteria which have direct political or ideological connotations, there are several others which are less obvious. As examples: "personal preparation" is understood to encompass both professional and ideological preparation or knowledge; "administrative abilities" connotes a variety of organizational duties of both service and political nature; "skill in training and educating subordinates" has as its goal improvements in both combat readiness and ideological indoctrination; and even "personal behavior" is more apt to reflect an officer's "political-moral" state, than it does his ability to lead by example. In short, despite the fact that it purports to assess the officer's professional qualities, the evaluation has at least equal political significance. Moreover, even with all of the talk about one-man management, the "zampolit" (or his equivalent in the political organization of the unit) almost certainly contributes to the preparation of this

professional evaluation, not infrequently offering an opinion on what would be considered purely professional items by anyone's criteria.

This political-ideological influence is even more apparent in discussions of personnel matters found in the Soviet military press. Not only is ideological significance attached to virtually every facet of service life, but fully half of the articles dealing with personnel affairs are prepared by officers in the Political Directorate. In their view—fully supported by the party, of course—the naval officer who takes an active personal interest in the ideological indoctrination of his men is worth salvaging, even though he may be totally incapable of directing their efforts in such basic tasks as painting ship. By the same token, the officer whose men are frequently guilty of breaches of discipline has failed, not so much in a professional sense, but because he has neglected the ideological training of his subordinates.

In the preceding chapter, in attempting to assess the political qualities of the Soviet naval officer, it was unavoidable that the dim line between professional and political qualities—as viewed by the Soviets—would be crossed at times. Similarly, it is difficult to confine the content of this chapter to his professional qualifications, without reference to the political association and some infringement upon the assessment of his personal or moral qualities, which will be presented in the chapter that follows. Such delineation has been attempted, however, by confining the coverage of this chapter to the two broad areas of professional competence and leadership ability, as they are generally defined in the U.S. Navy.

Professional Competence. It was noted earlier that the Soviet naval officers of the postwar generation are the products of an environment which is quite unlike that of their seniors. This is particularly true with regard to educational background. As described by one Soviet admiral, a revolution has taken place in the navy—one that pertains not only to equipment, but to personnel as well.

The men joining the Fleet today are men who, for the most part, have high school educations, as well as training at the university level. All officers have university educations. These are very literate, well-trained personnel who can employ intelligently the weapons entrusted to them by the people. They are successful in coping with the complex problems confronting them.²

It is true that most officers in the Soviet Navy today are graduates of the Higher Naval Schools, which provide them with a foundation in modern naval science at the university level. Judging from the comments of navy educators, however, as well as the complaints coming from the fleet, there is reason to question the ability of these schools to produce officers who are capable of employing the latest in naval weapons and equipment, and who are prepared to cope with the complexities of modern naval warfare.

As mentioned earlier, there is but one institution (Frunze Higher Naval School in Leningrad) which prepares naval cadets for unrestricted line officer duties in the surface and submarine forces. Other Higher Naval Schools prepare specialist officers for various engineering and staff duties. At all of these Higher Naval Schools, the cadets are limited to the very narrow field of their predestined speciality. Moreover, they receive little more than the basics in any professional subject, frequently without reference to late developments already in operational use in the fleet. At Frunze Higher Naval School, for example, the professional education of the cadets is apparently restricted to deck seamanship, shiphandling and navigation, with only a very general coverage of engineering, ordnance and electronics. The emphasis is on theoretical instruction and classroom demonstrations, with extremely limited opportunities for practical exercise. Much classroom time is devoted to nonprofessional subjects, such as the history of the Communist Party, communist philosophy and atheism. Thus, the cadets receive little more than an introduction to the naval profession during their four years of instruction, and considerable reliance must be placed on postgraduate training, both aboard ship and at installations ashore, to supplement the limited professional curricula at the Higher Naval Schools.

Soviet Navy authorities admit to the deficiencies which exist in the curricula at these schools, and they are apparently adding subjects intended to acquaint the cadets with some of the later developments in naval weapons and equipment. However, this has resulted in frequent complaints from instructors at the schools, that the curricula are becoming overloaded. They note that while more and more topics have been added to the curricula, there have been no adjustments made to compensate for them; thus, the new material must be covered at the expense of other subjects, and already limited time available for practical exercises must be further reduced. However, Soviet educators note that it is not only the lack of training time, but also a lack of equipment,

which seriously curtails individual work by the cadets. During a scheduled two-hour practical exercise, for example, each cadet may actually work on the equipment 20-30 minutes and spend the rest of the time watching his classmates. The opportunities for gaining practical experience during summer cruises are not much better, since the training ships used for this purpose are not fitted out with modern equipment.³

Complaints from the fleet also underlie the shortcomings in training at the naval schools. It is noted that newly commissioned officers are reporting for duty, totally ignorant of conditions aboard operating units of the navy. Not only are they unfamiliar with the type of ship to which they have been assigned, but some of them (notably specialists) have never before been aboard a ship of any kind. Even in something as basic as deck seamanship, the practical knowledge of the new line officers is so superficial, that they are incapable of directing the most routine of duties, such as small boat handling, line-handling, loading operations, cleaning and painting ship. Their practical shortcomings in other professional areas—e.g., navigation, piloting, shiphandling—are equally serious. Moreover, despite the several years which most of them have been exposed to the navy (as cadets in the Nakhimov and Higher Naval Schools), they actually know very little about navy life. For many of them, their first direct contact with the operating forces of the navy comes when they report to their ships for duty. Their education, which has been largely theoretical in nature, has failed to prepare them for most of the everyday tasks that lie ahead. Many of them, in fact, have little idea what is expected of them as junior officers in the fleet. For all, joining the fleet is really the very beginning of their training as naval officers.⁴

From the comments appearing in the Soviet Navy press, it is quite obvious that the training of junior officers, once they have joined the fleet, also leaves much to be desired. Probably no other subject is receiving more high-level attention, both from the navy and the party. As noted in a recent *Morskoy Sbornik* editorial:

Particular attention must be paid to improving work with young officers. Daily help must be given them in acquiring command skills, mastering the theory of military arts and the methods of training subordinates.⁵

Despite the high-level interest, numerous shortcomings in junior officer training are reported regularly, and it would appear that navy authorities are far from satisfied with the slow professional

development of watch officers and prospective commanding officers. In this connection, *Morskoy Sbornik* has contained several articles dealing with the training of submarine watch officers, who are singled out as having particularly grave responsibilities, even in the most routine of operations. It is pointed out that the submarine watch officer must be extremely knowledgeable in a variety of areas, including ship design and construction, ship's routine and shiphandling; further, that such knowledge can only be achieved through a daily training program, with the officer being given the opportunity to work independently. Apparently, such opportunities are rare, since the comment is made that most commanding officers do not trust their watch officers to work out maneuvering problems and make course and speed changes. Contrary to navy regulations (which specify that the commanding officer orders such changes through the watch officer), most commanding officers make a practice of issuing all commands themselves, with the watch officer no more than a detached onlooker on the bridge or in the conning station. Such a restrained attitude among commanding officers, it is pointed out, adversely affects the professional development of the junior officer.⁶

It is not only in watchstanding, but in several very basic professional areas, that the Soviet Navy junior officer appears to develop slowly. Both the deficiencies in his cadet training and the restrained attitude of his seniors aboard ship contribute to the problem. As an example, comment is made that the inadequacies of seamanship training at the Higher Naval Schools are compounded by the attitude of many commanding officers in minimizing the importance of this basic professional skill. Considering it to be of secondary importance, they fail to exercise the junior officers and the crew regularly, or they conduct such exercises as towing, fueling, and man overboard drills, only in good weather. The results of such an attitude are seen in a variety of accidents aboard ship—e.g., man overboard during loading operations in a calm sea; line-handling crews slow and inefficient, resulting in ship's damage while tying up; runaway anchor while mooring in deep water.

There are reports of even more serious accidents which can also be attributed to a lack of professional competence. As noted by the author of one article, ship collisions are being caused, principally as a result of failure to carry out directives governing navigational safety, but they are also due to insufficient knowledge of vital international rules of seamanship. It is not enough to know

what the different light combinations means, the author points out; commanding officers, watch officers and navigators must also have detailed familiarity with various maneuvering problems, to which little study or practice time is devoted. He also calls attention to the tendency among officers to resolve maneuvering problems "by eye" or "by ear," rather than relying on radar. This causes them to wait too long before making a move, in many cases causing collisions which might have been averted, had radar been employed.⁸

It is not only in deck seamanship and shiphandling, but also in navigation and piloting, that there are signs of incompetence in the Soviet Navy. This situation becomes more serious as units of the fleet operate at greater distances from home waters. In this connection, the Commander in Chief of the Navy noted:

The character of combat operations at sea . . . calls for safer piloting procedures and more reliable navigation during cruises. Under conditions where naval operations encompass all parts of the world's oceans . . . the navigational training of officers, and primarily that of commanding officers of ships, should be raised to a higher level.⁹

The problem is not restricted to improving the ability of the ship's navigator, but also involves training other officers to assist him. This was brought out in an article discussing a long cruise, during which there was a problem in arranging relief for the navigator. It was finally solved by having the head of the Communications Department act as assistant navigator, after he had been trained by the navigator to determine ship's position and make basic maneuvering computations.¹⁰ Apparently, this was not an isolated case, since another article in *Morskoy Sbornik* (dealing with navigational training for submariners) suggests that it is the exception when a submarine watch officer is qualified to navigate. The author of this article spoke about a navigation training program which he had established for junior officers on his submarine. From his description, it was a very basic course in navigation, the junior officers requiring instruction in the simplest of practical navigational procedures.¹¹

These basic professional skills of the line officer—"command skills," as they are called by the Soviets—constitute almost the entire professional curriculum at Frunze Higher Naval School, which all junior line officers presumably have attended. It hardly

seems possible that they would have learned so little during their four years there; yet, these are the complaints which come from the fleet. Conceivably, the situation is not quite so bad as pictured; this may be the fleet's way of calling attention to the need for more practical experience at the naval schools. Indeed, this lack of practical training does constitute a serious shortcoming in the education of naval cadets, as does the compartmentation of their education within the narrow scope of their specialized fields. This was brought to light by a submarine commanding officer who expressed concern about the lack of practical damage control training received by line officers. He attempted to solve the problem on his submarine by instituting an extensive program of instruction—lectures, demonstrations and group drills—for all officers and men in each watch section. His attitude was shared by another submarine commanding officer who felt that his watch officers knew too little about the engineering plant, and he therefore had them standing engineering watches, "to get the feel of the ship."¹² These commanding officers appear to be exceptions, however, and on most ships—particularly the major surface combatants—such efforts to expand the scope of the junior officer's professional knowledge probably do not exist.

It is not only with the junior officers, but with the senior officers as well, that professional limitations come to light. This is particularly true with regard to new developments in naval weapons and equipment, and their methods of employment. In this connection, one *Morskoy Sbornik* editorial contained the following comment:

There are also shortcomings in officer training; now and then the study of the characteristics of new weapons and the methods of their employment, of questions of directing forces in order to fulfill tasks under complex conditions, are studied poorly.¹³

Similar comment is found in other articles which deplore the attitude of some officers with regard to new developments. The tenor of these complaints is that the officers underestimate the complexity of new equipment and weaponry, employing it haphazardly and attempting to get by with obsolete knowledge. They have also failed to keep abreast of improvements in conventional arms, and they are still working in the old way, at a slow pace, using automation to a limited extent.¹⁴

It is difficult to accept this as being truly representative of the Soviet naval officer corps' attitude toward advances in weaponry and changes in naval warfare concepts. At least one out of four officers in the navy today has had formal post-graduate education, which presumably would encompass the latest in naval developments.¹⁵ It seems more likely that this restrained attitude toward change is prevalent among the senior officers, rather than the corps as a whole. Such would seem to be suggested by the comment which was contained in an article on naval tactics:

Everything new, before it is embodied in our consciousness, has to penetrate painstakingly the obstacles of habitual concepts which had been developed for decades, and which had crept into our flesh and blood along with the 'canons' of earlier prescribed regulations and through the experience gained in the last war. Therefore, an openly critical revision of a number of concepts on the theory of naval art is important and urgent.¹⁶

The postwar generation of naval officers, it is thought, would be more susceptible to change. Theirs would not be a matter of attitude, but a question of inadequate knowledge and experience, which would inhibit their acceptance of new naval developments and concepts.

To a large extent, *Morskoy Sbornik* is employed as a vehicle to bring these new concepts and developments to the attention of the officer corps. Articles in this publication not only deal with the changes which are taking place in the Soviet Navy, but more often make reference to foreign naval developments as a means of keeping the Soviet naval officer abreast of the latest in weaponry and equipment, as well as its employment. By and large, the articles on foreign navies (usually the U.S. Navy) are far more detailed and revealing than those on the Soviet Navy. This is probably prompted by security considerations, but at the same time, it provides a convenient means whereby the Soviet naval officer is informed about the probable enemy, a subject which is receiving more and more attention. As outlined by a general of the Soviet Naval Air Arm:

Now, as never before in the past, all commanders, chiefs, staff officers and personnel of aviation and supporting units are required to have a high order of naval training, including a thorough knowledge of the probable enemy, his weapons and equipment and the

methods he uses in combat operations, as well as his strong points and weak points.¹⁷

Judging from the articles appearing in *Morskoy Sbornik*, the Soviet naval officer is receiving far more accurate information about foreign naval developments and capabilities than he was as recently as five years ago. This is not to say that the view presented him is completely unbiased. To the contrary, there is still a tendency to underrate U.S. Navy achievements both during and since World War II, and to overemphasize the vulnerabilities of NATO naval forces in any future conflict. At times, the Soviet naval officer must become thoroughly confused by the inconsistencies which frequently appear in these articles. Despite this shortcoming, he may know as much (and possibly more) about the probable enemy, than does his U.S. counterpart. In some respects, it seems that he knows less about his own navy, than he does about the navies of the NATO countries.

From the foregoing, one might gain the impression that the Soviet naval officer is thoroughly incompetent professionally. This, of course, is not so. The Soviet military press tends to highlight individual shortcomings in areas which the authorities feel need greater attention, and in so doing they may create the impression that these shortcomings are shared by a large percentage of the officer corps. In actual fact, the average Soviet naval officer of the postwar generation probably meets the professional standards set by the navy and the party, but only after he has had the benefit of considerable practical experience in the fleet to overcome the deficiencies in his cadet training, and postgraduate education at some time early in his career to bring him up to date on developments in naval weaponry and operations. The shortcomings which he does possess would result from compartmentation—limited knowledge outside his own specialized field—and limited operational experience under realistic conditions. The latter shortcoming is one which has been recognized by Soviet Navy leaders, who note that units of the fleet have heretofore conducted few exercises at night, during winter, and under unfavorable meteorological conditions. It is worth noting that the past few years have witnessed a concerted effort on the part of the Soviets, to correct this deficiency.¹⁸

Professional knowledge and competence are only part of the picture, however. Of at least equal importance in assessing the professional qualities of the Soviet naval officer is the manner in which he puts this knowledge and these skills to use, both

through his own direct efforts and those of his subordinates—in short, his ability as a leader.

Leadership Ability. This is an area in which the Soviet naval officer must frequently find himself in a quandary. On the one hand, Soviet Navy authorities are urging him to demonstrate greater initiative in the execution of his duties; on the other hand, he knows that too much initiative is apt to be viewed with disfavor by the party, to which he must also answer. As a result, he tends to do no more than is absolutely necessary, in order to stay out of trouble. Often, this translates into doing nothing, in order to do nothing wrong. This attitude manifests itself in many ways, much to the consternation of Navy leaders. Typical of this high-level concern was Admiral Gorshkov's VE-Day anniversary statement, which dealt in part with the need for greater personal responsibility in fulfilling obligations and eliminating shortcomings in the fleet.¹⁹

Responsibility, according to one Soviet admiral, manifests itself in constant concern about combat readiness; it presupposes the execution of a strictly defined scope of duties, and it comprises both self-discipline and discipline of one's subordinates.²⁰ Such concern apparently is not shared by all Soviet naval officers, and the need for improved combat readiness is not adequately appreciated throughout the fleet. As noted in one *Morskoy Sbornik* editorial, for example, some Northern Fleet commanding officers have not "encouraged socialist competition," thereby lowering their standards and the state of readiness achieved through earlier training.²¹ The shortcomings in combat training have also been deplored by the Chief of the Navy Political Directorate, who has commented that certain commanding officers and political organizations are providing meager leadership in fleet training competitions. As he described it, there is much "ballyhoo" about assigning responsibility and assuming obligations, but nothing is being done to ensure that tasks are actually being accomplished properly.²² In Soviet terminology, this sin is described as "formalism"—in effect, going through the motions of a plan or exercise for appearance's sake. In such cases, the Chief of the Pacific Fleet Political Department notes, the plan or exercise is frequently prepared in a hurry to meet the demands of higher authority. It is often ill-prepared, calls for more action than is really necessary, and is executed in a slipshod manner, without adequate supervision.²³ "Formalism" is not uncommon in the Soviet Navy, and apparently it exists at all levels. It leads to other evils, such as "complacency, indifference, redtape-ism,

window-dressing and windbag-ism," all of which reflect a lack of responsibility on the part of the officers concerned. This shortcoming, which is the subject of frequent discussions in the Soviet naval press, has been noted and cited by the Commanders of all four Soviet Fleets.²⁴

Equally serious are the charges of conceit and deception levied by Admiral Grishanov in a recent *Morskoy Sbornik* article. He observed that there are leaders in the navy who do not hesitate to boast about their own achievements—even the most insignificant—at the same time not seeing or admitting to serious shortcomings in performance, both their own and that of their subordinates. Other leaders lack sufficient courage and decisiveness to replace subordinates who fail to measure up to prescribed standards of performance. There are also officers who have had to be relieved of their duties and "sentenced in party proceedings" for carelessness, dishonesty and deceit. He noted that such officers have forgotten that, above all, they must be models of "party-ism," honesty and strict self-discipline; further, that they must be demanding, not only of their subordinates, but also of themselves.²⁵

In all, it was a serious indictment of the Soviet naval officer as a leader, but certainly no more so than the following comment about discipline, which appeared in a recent *Morskoy Sbornik* lead article:

The state of military discipline in several units does not meet the requirements of . . . the Party. In the Pacific Fleet and in other Fleets, on several ships and in several units, isolated cases of extreme incidents and immoral deeds are still noted.²⁶

The disciplinary situation in the navy seems to be even more serious than was indicated by this article, judging from the high-level interest being shown in the matter, and in the vast amount of coverage it is receiving in the naval press. It was dealt with at length by the Commander in Chief of the Navy in his VE-Day anniversary statement, it has been commented on by all four Fleet Commanders, and it continues to be the subject of numerous *Morskoy Sbornik* articles and editorials.²⁷

From the large number of cases cited in *Morskoy Sbornik*, it is evident that the problem stems directly from the Soviet naval officer's improper attitude toward his subordinates, enlisted

personnel in particular. This attitude is characterized by two extremes of behavior: some officers all but ignore their subordinates, or treat them in a condescending or shabby manner; others attempt to ingratiate themselves with their subordinates, becoming overly familiar and not sufficiently demanding in their requirements. Of the two extremes, the former is by far the more prevalent. Cited are numerous cases, wherein officers are guilty of inattention to the appearance, attitude, behavior, qualifications, work habits and living conditions of their men. Also noted are many instances of officers who resort to vulgarity, profanity, shouting, rudeness and public reprimand, in their dealings with subordinates. (Junior officers are not immune from such treatment, even in the presence of their men.) Another frequent complaint is the hasty administration of punishment, without adequate investigation, and at times involving extreme disciplinary measures for minor offenses. (Often, it appears, this involves the disciplining of junior officers, in violation of their rights under the disciplinary regulations.) At the other end of the scale, cases are cited wherein officers have ignored disciplinary violations of their subordinates, have failed to record or report offenses, and have even resorted to falsifying records. As observed in one of the *Morshoy Sbornik* articles, officers such as these can not be respected by their subordinates. To bring the point home, an old Russian axiom was resurrected: "A serviceman loves a good friend and a stern commander." 28

In the Soviet Navy, the officer's responsibility for his subordinates decidedly does not end at the quarterdeck. It is clearly spelled out in the Armed Forces regulations, with frequent reminders in the military press, that it is not enough to concern oneself solely with the service life of subordinates; the officer also has a responsibility for their actions in their off-duty or private lives.²⁹

As might be expected, the poor leadership performance of the Soviet naval officer in matters of duty can only become worse as soon as he leaves his ship or station at the end of working hours. In fact, navy leaders appear almost reluctant to rely on the regular officer to exercise leadership and uphold discipline ashore, counting on the political organizations to continue to shoulder this burden. In this connection, the Northern Fleet Commander commented:

Commanders and political organizations have much to do toward the further strengthening of military discipline,

toward bringing to an end the incidents of immoral acts committed ashore by individual servicemen. It is necessary to organize the leisure time of the crews better, especially on holidays and days off. This opens up a wide field of activity for the Fleet Komsomol, which must actively draw the youth into sport and group-culture activities.³⁰

This view was seconded by the Head of the Main Political Directorate of the Navy, who noted that the off-duty evening hours of both enlisted personnel and junior officers were quite dull, and that it was up to the Komsomol to arrange activities to keep them interested and occupied. He made no mention whatsoever of the senior officers' responsibility in this regard.³¹

If the Soviet naval officer is not being held completely responsible for the actions of his subordinates during their off-duty hours, he is very definitely held accountable for his own behavior, both in his service and personal life. Not only is this spelled out in the regulations, but the officer is constantly reminded of the special responsibility which is his, in setting a good example of self-disciplined and blameless behavior at all times.³²

Despite the constant reminders, it is a measure of the Soviet naval officer's questionable leadership ability, that he frequently sets a bad example for his subordinates in the performance of his duties. In addition to the several undesirable traits enumerated earlier in this chapter, there are reports of such serious offenses among officer personnel, as negligence in the performance of duties, falsification of work and disciplinary records, and violations of orders and regulations.³³ While such serious offenses are probably not widespread in the fleet, they do serve to undermine discipline whenever they occur. From the evidence that is available, the state of discipline in the Soviet Navy is such that even isolated instances of improper behavior on the part of officer personnel can not be tolerated.

From the foregoing, it would seem that the average Soviet naval officer would not meet the criteria of professional leadership as it is understood in the U.S. Navy. Conceivably, the further strengthening of the "one-man management" concept will serve to overcome his shortcomings in the area. For the time being, however, the party continues to exercise a large measure of leadership in the navy, "persuading" both the

officer and his subordinates to carry out their assigned tasks, and "punishing" them when they fail to measure up to party standards.

As long as this condition exists—and the end of political control in the navy is nowhere in sight—the professional performance and evaluation of the Soviet naval officer will continue to bear the stamp of the party. Since the influence of the party extends to every facet of navy life, including the private life of the individual officer, this stamp will also be seen in the following evaluation of his personal qualities.

FOOTNOTES

Chapter III

1. Gusakovskiy, p. 10.

2. Petelin, p. 42.

3. A.Ye. Kremenetskiy, "Combat Training and Political Indoctrination Improving the Practical Training of Cadets," *Morskoy Sbornik*, June 1964, v.p.; R.V. Basinin and V.A. Iossa, "Podgotovka kursantov voenno-morskykh uchilishch" (The Training of Naval Academy Cadets), *Morskoy Sbornik*, May 1965, v.p. The writer made an official visit to Frunze Higher Naval School in June 1964, and in addition to receiving a briefing on the curriculum, visited several classrooms and laboratories. He was advised that the mission of the school is to prepare watchstanders and future commanding officers; that the cadets therefore receive no training in engineering, ordnance and electronics, these subjects being taught only at the specialized schools. However, there is reason to believe that Frunze cadets are at least exposed to these subjects during the course of instruction. According to officers at Frunze, the cadets spend their summers aboard units of the fleet, those selected for submarine duty going to submarines for their third and final summer cruise. Whether these are actually operating units of the fleet, or even get underway at any time during the summer "cruise," is questionable. It seems likely that the cadets make their first two cruises aboard the many sail trainers still in the Soviet Navy, and then report to a reserve combatant for part or all of the third summer.

4. Conditions are particularly trying for the junior officer reporting to small craft for his first assignment. He may be put in command of two or three small units, and with no senior officer readily available to guide him, he is faced with the prospect of trying to master a variety of unfamiliar weapons and equipment, at the same time attempting to direct the activities of his men. Judging from fleet comments, the situation is not too much better for the junior officer reporting to a major combatant for his first shipboard duty. As is often the case in other navies, the Soviet junior officer is immediately confronted with numerous collateral duties—e.g., political group leader, chairman of the sport committee. Accustomed to the regimentation of the naval school, he frequently

has difficulty in apportioning his time properly, with the result that he falls behind in all of his duties. As noted by one submarine commanding officer, the position of such a junior officer is often made more difficult by his required attendance at meetings and conferences, where efforts are made to "persuade" him, or where he is "punished." This further reduces the time which he should have for studying and mastering his primary duty, with the final result that he may prove useless to the navy. Although not stated outright, the inference was that most such collateral duties are under the control of the political organizations aboard ship, and that the time wasted at political meetings could be put to better use in perfecting professional skills. (R.P. Karpov, "Training the Ship's Crew at Sea," *Morskoy Sbornik*, March 1964, v.p.; R.V. Basinin and V.T. Stavitskiy, "Know Well the Theory of Naval Architecture and Ship's Seaworthiness," *Morskoy Sbornik*, May 1964, v.p.; A.D. Dzhavakhishvili, "Several Comments on the Training of Young Officers," *Morskoy Sbornik*, May 1964, v.p.; Yu.V. Rotermel', "How to Save and Distribute Time Allotted for Training Young Officers," *Morskoy Sbornik*, December 1963, v.p.; S.S. Kostarev, "How We Pass on Our Experience to Young Officers," *Morskoy Sbornik*, December 1963, v.p.; A.I. Semenov, "Indoctrinating the Young Officer," *Morskoy Sbornik*, September 1964, v.p.

5. "Do Not Be Content," p. 6.

6. V.S. Malyarchuk, "Submarine Watch Officer's Training," *Morskoy Sbornik*, September 1963, v.p.

7. [Sic.]

8. V.S. Baryshev, "Each Officer Must Have a Thorough Knowledge of the Regulations for the Prevention of Ship Collisions at Sea," *Morskoy Sbornik*, May 1964, v.p.

9. Admiral Gorshkov, *Krasnaya Zvezda* (Red Star), 5 February 1963, quoted in A.N. Aleksandrov and O.L. Kufarev, "A Basic Work," *Morskoy Sbornik*, April 1964, p. 54.

10. V.K. Chirov, "Osobennosti boevoy podgotovki v dal'nem pakhode" (Characteristics of Combat Training during a Long Cruise), *Morskoy Sbornik*, March 1965, v.p.

11. V.S. Malyarchuk, "Navigation Training for Submarine Watch Officers," *Morskoy Sbornik*, November 1963, v.p.

12. Malyarchuk, "Submarine Watch Officer's Training," v.p.; N.A. Denisov, "Experience in Training Submarine Personnel in Damage Control," *Morskoy Sbornik*, August 1963, v.p.

13. "Do Not Be Content," p. 5.

14. P.N. Medvedev, "Party Principles at Work," *Morskoy Sbornik*, May 1964, v.p.; "New Successes in Combat and Political Training," *Morskoy Sbornik*, January 1964, p. 2. (Cited hereafter as "New Successes.")

15. Soviet authorities state that half of the officers in the navy have received technical-engineering training, and that the "commander-engineer" is becoming the basic figure in the officer corps. As to the percentage of officers who have received post-graduate training, it is noted that the Head of the Navy Political Directorate places this at 50 rather than 25 percent. Conceivably, he was either counting political officers in his figures, or he was including postgraduate education in ideological studies by regular officers, a not infrequent occurrence. (Grishanov, p. 9; "Invincible Guardian," p. 8.)

16. Yu.V. Kolesnikov, "Certain Categories of Naval Tactics," *Morskoy Sbornik*, November 1963, p. 7.

17. I.I. Borzov, "Active Introduction of Progressive Experience in Tactical Air Training," *Morskoy Sbornik*, July 1964, p. 37.

18. V.I. Anisimov, "More Attention to Practical Preparation of Ship's Personnel," *Morskoy Sbornik*, November 1963, p. 16.

19. Gorshkov, p. 7, cf. ante p. 20.

20. Vyrelkin, p. 6.

21. "New Successes," p. 2.

22. Grishanov, p. 15.

23. M.N. Zakharov, "Increase the Effectiveness of Military and Technical Knowledge," *Morskoy Sbornik*, December 1963, p. 12.

24. The Commander in Chief of the Pacific Fleet dealt with this problem at some length in a recent article on combat training. (N. Amel'ko, "Rukovodit' boevoy ucheboy konkretno, tvorcheski" [Lead Combat Training Concretely, Creatively], *Kommunist Vooruzhennykh Sil*, September 1965, p. 17.) All four Fleet Commanders made reference to the lack of personal responsibility, in letters to *Morskoy Sbornik* on the eve of Soviet Navy Day 1965. ("Under the Flag," v.p.) In the Black Sea Fleet, the inspection of a cruiser in 1964, prior to departure on an "important, long cruise," revealed almost unbelievable discrepancies in the appearance of the ship and its crew. It was noted that everything about the ship testified to the failure to carry through with results achieved earlier, to complacency and a lessening of demands on the ship's company. (B.M. Volosatov, "Bol'she vnimaniya bytu moryakov" [More Attention to the Sailors' Living Conditions], *Morskoy Sbornik*, June 1965, p. 23.) The comment of yet another Soviet admiral, with regard to responsibility, is of interest. He noted that discipline is inseparably linked with verification of work; that in order to make an officer feel responsible for clearly defined tasks, he should understand that his work will surely be checked. According to the admiral, experience has shown that when such checking is absent, conditions are created which lead to omissions and disruptions in the work schedule. (Vyrelkin, p. 5.) Although this lack of responsibility appears to be navy-wide, it is worthy of note that the most serious charges seem to be confined to the Pacific and Northern Fleets.

25. Grishanov, p. 11-12. In another article on this subject, it was noted that some officers are guilty of attempting to present desired results as actual achievements, mediocre results as good ones. Others were found to conceal defects in combat readiness and violations of orders and regulations, even to the extent of falsifying records. This article also commented on favoritism in the navy, observing that some people are assigned to command and other high positions because of personal contacts, rather than ability; further, that officers are not always rated objectively on their evaluation reports, in some cases their capabilities being grossly overstated. (Medvedev, v.p.)

26. "Do Not Be Content," p. 4. Note the reference to the Pacific Fleet. The term "immoral" was not further defined, but it probably was used to describe all acts which might be contrary to "communist morality," rather than the more restricted definition understood in the West.

27. Gorshkov, p. 7. Most such articles and editorials relate discipline directly to combat readiness. As noted in one of these editorials: "The most important requisite for a high state of combat readiness is iron military discipline, strict order aboard ships and in units." The observation was also made that discipline in the navy has assumed even greater significance as a result of the changes which have taken place in naval warfare: "In a future war, even isolated breaches of discipline could result in irreversible harm. The atomic submarine differs sharply from the submarines of the last war. Its operating area has expanded immeasurably, and submergence depths, speeds and times have increased. A qualitative change has also occurred in naval aviation, as well as in missile and antisubmarine ships. The new complicated technology and thermonuclear weapons have imposed great demands on the state of combat training and on the diligence of naval personnel. Every serviceman must have quick reactions and the ability to make independent decisions, to act boldly and accurately within regulations and in strict consonance with the requirements of the situation." ("Iron Military Discipline," p. 3.)

28. Vyrelkin, v.p.; Kostarev, v.p.; "Iron Military Discipline," v.p.; M.V. Fisyun, "Experience in Party and Political Work in Strengthening Military Discipline," *Morskoy Sbornik*, November 1963, v.p.; S.A. Gulyaev, "Perfect the Education and Training Methods of Flight Crews," *Morskoy Sbornik*, February 1964, v.p. The marked caste system found in the Soviet Navy probably accounts for many of the shortcomings in dealing with subordinates. Also contributing significantly is the lack of practical leadership experience throughout the officer corps, for which the party is largely to blame. The political organizations which it has created in the navy have usurped much of the regular officer's disciplinary authority for many years, and he is only now being called upon to assume greater responsibility in this area.

29. U.S.S.R. *Internal Regulations*, arts. 49, 56, p. 25, 27.

30. "Under the Flag," p. 14.

31. V.M. Grishanov, "The Leninist Komsomol—a Fighting Assistant to the Communist Party," *Morskoy Sbornik*, July 1964, p. 18. Admiral Grishanov noted that the men's plans for off-duty days often involve viewing movies, television, and playing certain kinds of games. There are too few "tea rooms," and those that do exist are frequently poorly equipped and not inviting

in appearance to naval personnel. Activities in the seamen's clubs are dull and uninteresting, and they are carried out without enthusiasm. The writer supports these views, recalling some officers' clubs he visited in the Soviet Union, as well as one "Cocktail Hall" in Sevastopol, which boasted nothing more potent than ice cream. However, the men do find more typically sailor-on-liberty ways to occupy themselves, although admittedly, the writer saw remarkably few cases of extreme drunkenness or misbehavior among Soviet enlisted personnel. At the same time, he never witnessed a Soviet naval officer reprimanding an enlisted man for improper appearance or behavior in public.

32. *U.S.S.R. Internal Regulations*, art. 54, p. 27.

33. "New Successes," p. 4.

CHAPTER IV

THE PERSONAL QUALITIES OF THE SOVIET NAVAL OFFICER

Under modern conditions, requirements set forth with respect to the moral, physical and psychological qualities of service personnel are greater than ever.¹

The Psychology of the Soviet Naval Officer. According to the article in which the above quotation appeared, ideological and party-political activity has assumed increased importance as a means of developing desirable personal qualities in personnel of the Armed Forces. This is no idle claim. The party—and through it, communism—has been and continues to be a major factor in shaping the attitudes and behavior of the entire Soviet population. As a result of almost fifty years of Communist rule, the character of the Soviet citizen has undergone substantial changes, some of these reflecting reversals in long-standing attitudes and cultural values. This is not to suggest that the regime has succeeded in creating what it likes to refer to as "the new Soviet man." Instead, it has managed to graft onto the Soviet citizen the so-called "Communist moral code," which at times conflicts with his basic nature and those traits which have remained unchanged from long before the revolution.

The Soviet naval officer—even the member of the postwar generation who has known nothing but Communist rule—is no less affected by these inner contradictions, than is his civilian counterpart. Because of his two-sided nature, it is often difficult to predict how he might react to various situations and stimuli. He is very much a study in contrasts, but no more so than the environment in which he developed, and which has played such an important part in shaping his character.

Most marked of the contrasts within this environment is the existence of well-defined castes within a "classless" society. As mentioned earlier, the naval officer is a member of an elite group within this society, and in most cases came from an elite group originally. As such, he enjoys many social and economic benefits. In addition to the very real prestige which is his as an

officer in the Soviet Navy, there are such materialistic bonuses as better pay than his civilian counterpart, a modest retirement plan, better housing, and the privilege of utilizing the Voentorg (the Soviet version of the Post Exchange) with its greater selection and lower prices than those found in stores for the general population. These are tangible benefits in a society still suffering from critical shortages in housing, food and consumer goods. Moreover, the young Soviet naval officer knows that as he advances in rank, the increased social and economic benefits accruing to him are considerable. Therefore, he has every reason—for the present and the future—to want to succeed in his naval career.

This drive for personal advancement is but one of several basic attitudes which the Communists have been unable to eradicate. In fact, they have long since surrendered to such driving forces, and to a certain extent have served to foster them. Another good example is the Russian attitude toward the family. The need for a well-regulated family life is deeply engrained in the Russian character, and it has survived under the most trying of conditions, some of which have been regime-inspired in the past. Even the critical housing shortage, which is to blame for most divorces in the Soviet Union, has had relatively little effect on the strength of the family unit. However, the housing shortage has had an impact on the birth rate, as has the need for most wives to work full time and contribute to the family income. As a result of both of these factors, there are relatively few couples with more than one child. It is fair to say that under other conditions, virtually all of them would hope to have larger families. The few children which they do have, they coddle and spoil, constantly making sacrifices for them. Even with the mother working, and despite the crowded living conditions, most couples resist the temptation to place the children in government-run nurseries, except while the mother is actually working. For such people, to whom family and children are so important, the home takes on great significance. To a very large percentage of the Soviet population, the home is a single room; the young Soviet naval officer stationed in one of the larger cities, on the other hand, is probably fortunate enough to have a two- or three-room apartment. If so, he has achieved a measure of privacy—something which is the goal of so many Soviet citizens, and which has eluded them for so many years. Even if it is but a single room, it is the Soviet citizen's only sanctuary from the drab, colorless atmosphere which characterizes even the larger cities of the Soviet Union, and he therefore wants it to be as cheerful and comfortable as possible.

Even today, this is not easy to accomplish. While the Soviet naval officer is better off than his civilian counterpart in this respect, he is still faced with shortages, not only in home furnishings, but in food and other consumer goods as well. However, it is far from the bare subsistence level which confronted him just a few years ago. Like most of the Soviet population, as more and better products have become available on the market, he has become quite critical of poor quality, high prices and limited variety. He has also developed a taste for more luxury items, and like the other educated and well-placed members of his generation, he is showing an active interest in such capitalistic trappings as automobiles, transistorized radios, tape recorders, and modish clothes for his family and himself. In large measure, this has resulted from recently increased contact with the West, which has also brought about significant changes in his tastes in music, dancing, films and literature.

In this connection, it is worth noting that the Russian has always been enchanted with anything foreign, but his interest has piqued noticeably in the past few years. This is particularly true of the younger generation, whose members not only have the interest, but also lack the caution of their elders, when it comes to engaging Western tourists in conversation. Even with the increased opportunities for contact with the West, the young Soviet frequently reflects his long isolation from the outside world. Despite the very real accomplishments which have been achieved by the Soviet Union on the world scene, he has yet to overcome certain traits which almost certainly must stem from his years of isolation.

Foremost among these is a sense of inferiority which is deeply engrained in the Russian character, and which is very much in evidence throughout the Soviet Union even today. Frequently, the Soviet citizen attempts to overcome (or mask) this inferiority complex, by almost childlike boasting about accomplishments, both real and fancied. This trait also makes him extremely sensitive to criticism from an outsider, as well as bitterly resentful of any suggestion of cavalier treatment at the hands of a foreigner. He is wont to criticize or make fun of himself, but his hackles go up the minute a foreigner so much as hints at a shortcoming in him personally, or in his country. In his dealings with foreigners, he frequently exhibits a great deal of suspicion and reserve, although he is normally quite courteous—at times, even "old world" in his manners. However, when the mood strikes him, he can be extremely overbearing, stuffy, crude and sarcastic. In his

dealings with other Soviets, not infrequently he is rude and even uncouth, particularly when it involves someone who is his junior or who might be considered inferior to him in any way. Conversely, he is inclined to accept similar treatment from his superior without question, demonstrating what might be described as apathy, passivity or automatism. This trait frequently manifests itself in other ways—e.g., apparent acceptance of the inevitable, reluctance to assume personal responsibility, adoption of a stoicism which often seems impenetrable. Such traits, it will be noted, could also have developed during and as a result of almost fifty years of totalitarian rule. In the case of the Russian, however, they existed long before the revolution, and the years since have served to etch them into the Russian character that much more deeply. It would be a serious error to assume, though, that they are completely resistant to change. In particular, it would be a grave mistake to believe that the stoic exterior, frequently adopted by the Soviet, is an empty shell. On the contrary, it often houses very strong emotions, kept in check by a person accustomed to years of authoritarian rule, but capable of breaking through, if properly stimulated. There is perhaps no better example than that provided by the latter years of World War II.²

These character traits—as well as the party, environmental and cultural influences mentioned earlier—carry over into both the service and private life of the Soviet naval officer. In his service life, they are frequently reflected in his attitude toward his duties and in his relations with other naval personnel. As outlined in the previous chapter, not uncommonly this results in such shortcomings as indifference, conceit, deception, vulgarity and rudeness. In his private life, as will be shown, they are reflected in his relations within the family unit and society as a whole.

The Private Life of the Soviet Naval Officer. In describing the degree of party interference in the personal affairs of service personnel, a former Soviet naval officer has noted the particular attention which is paid to the officer's marital life. He has stated that, despite the efforts of the party, the failure rate among navy marriages is unusually high, particularly in the Northern and Pacific Fleets. He attributed this to the isolation and severe climatic conditions of most bases in these fleet areas, as well as the long periods of separation while the men are at sea. In his view, a basic difficulty stems from the hurried choice of wives by many of the younger officers attached to these fleets. There are few eligible women living in these remote areas, and the bachelor officers tend to marry the local women after a very short courtship,

or they "shop" for wives during their brief leaves in the larger cities. For the woman who leaves a relatively cosmopolitan environment for life at one of these remote bases, there is not only a severe drop in living standard to contend with, but also the climate of these bleak regions. According to this former officer, living conditions at these bases are extremely difficult. The officers' communal quarters are overcrowded, and the families exist in a barracks-like atmosphere. The lack of privacy leads to a variety of personal problems, and infidelity is not at all uncommon. Still, divorce has been made almost impossible for the naval officer, and if the marriage proves to have been a mistake, the couple must make the best of it.³

Discussions in the Soviet military press tend to confirm this former officer's statements regarding party interference in the marital life of the Soviet naval officer. In one of several articles calling for greater attention to the professional development of junior officers, it was stated that experience continues to demonstrate that the "military work, training and personal life of an officer are inseparable," and that all of these items require "constant attention and the paternal concern of his leaders." The point is made that the family exerts a great influence on the career of the young officer; further, that while it is not always possible to satisfy all of the needs of the young family, consideration for the family should always be shown. In a model unit, the commanding officer or his assistant takes a personal interest in each newly arrived family, finding employment for the wife and encouraging her participation in civic activities within the navy community. Such personal interest, it is noted, will have considerable influence on the conduct of both the officer and his wife, which may ultimately affect his performance of duty. Cited is the case of a lieutenant whose personal problems affected adversely his professional performance. From his first day aboard ship, he was lackadaisical about his duties and disinterested in his men. Eventually, he became a disciplinary problem, useless to the navy. It was determined that his difficulties stemmed from a personal problem, wherein his wife had refused to accompany him to his duty station.

Apparently, this is not an unusual case, particularly in the Northern and Pacific Fleet areas, and to a certain extent, at some bases in the Baltic as well. Living conditions at naval bases in these regions leave much to be desired—the Pacific Fleet seems to have the greatest problems in this respect—and young wives are often reluctant to leave the relative luxury of the big cities

for the austerity of these remote bases. In this article and two others calling for improved living conditions for service personnel and their families, the particular problems of these remote bases are dealt with at length. Serious housing shortages are cited as constituting a major difficulty in these areas, with new construction falling behind schedule, and the quality of construction being very poor. At one base, the problem was partially solved through the personal efforts of the members of the unit, with various administration and small factory buildings and barracks being converted into quarters. The people also built a dispensary and furnished a club, attesting to two other problems which seem to plague personnel in these remote areas: inadequate medical and recreational facilities. At this "model" base, personnel and their dependents also tackled the problem of food shortages, which are created primarily by inadequate storage facilities and limited transportation into these regions. In this case, they were allotted small plots of ground and encouraged to grow their own potatoes and other vegetables. While these measures may have succeeded in easing the food problem to a degree, there still remained a difficult situation with regard to other basic commodities, which were in short supply and extremely limited variety. Noted in particular were shortages of proper clothing for children, and such basic items as underwear, socks, shoes and boots for adults as well. While such problems confront a very large segment of the Soviet population—the housing, food and consumer goods situation of the average Soviet citizen is equally austere—it should be noted that most naval officers and their families come from the larger cities of the Soviet Union, where they enjoyed a somewhat better living standard than their civilian counterparts.⁴

In addition to being plunged into the bleak and austere atmosphere of these remote regions, the wives in particular encounter the almost overwhelming problem of boredom, which is always the breeding ground for personal difficulties. One such difficulty might well be marital infidelity, which the former Soviet naval officer earlier cited as a not uncommon occurrence at these remote bases. In this connection, he also pointed out that even the personal lives of unmarried officers are carefully scrutinized by the party for breaches of morality. He noted that should an officer be discovered "infringing upon the standards of Communist ethics"—a Soviet euphemism for illicit intercourse—he would be severely castigated at party or Komsomol meetings and publicly disgraced. He cited personal knowledge of one Soviet officer who shot himself after his private life had

been laid bare in this manner. Similar party criticism and public reprimand also apply in the case of excessive drinking. According to this former officer, most such cases lead to dismissal from the service. He cited excessive drinking as the most widespread vice among Soviet naval officers, but qualified this by saying that only a relatively small sector of the officer corps is adversely affected by it.⁵

Once again, the Soviet military press tends to confirm the views of this former Soviet naval officer. One article dealing with questions of morality among naval personnel contained the admission that, despite the efforts of the political organizations, there are still cases in the navy of drunkenness, widespread vulgarity and "caddish behavior toward women," as well as "broken guarantees," absences without leave, and "unworthy behavior in public places." From the tenor of the article, it was apparent that enlisted personnel were the principle perpetrators of these misdeeds. However, this and other articles have cited inadequate recreational facilities as a major cause of misdemeanors such as these, and note has been made that too little attention is being paid to the off-duty activities of both enlisted personnel and unmarried junior officers. One might conclude from this, that young officers are not excepted from comparable charges.⁶

According to this article, the commission of such "immoral acts" can be traced to the "vestiges of the past which are still inculcated in some Soviet people." By definition, such "vestiges from the past" also include "religious superstitions and various manifestations of nationalism," all of which are still to be found among service personnel. By way of elaboration, it was noted that service personnel, in whom "religious superstitions are still alive," believe in a divine predetermination of events and are convinced that powerful supernatural forces are at work; further, that this, as a rule, "oppresses the will of such soldiers and sailors, and undermines their faith in their own strength, activism and initiative." There was no indication as to how widespread religious influence might be in the service, but any degree would be of some concern to the regime. The antireligious propaganda campaign is a continuing one in the Soviet Union, and although organized religion has been severely suppressed, the regime has not succeeded in eradicating the religious beliefs which even some members of the younger generation still retain. In commenting on this subject, the former Soviet naval officer referred to earlier observed that while it is virtually impossible to practice religious rites in the navy, a belief in a "force of destiny" has

made great inroads among naval officers. (This may well be the "divine predetermination of events" to which reference was made.) This former officer also noted that the regime's greatest problems in this regard are with those of the Moslem faith, who are particularly tenacious about clinging to their religious beliefs.⁷

This suggests that it was not by coincidence that religion and nationalism were grouped together as "vestiges of the past" which tend to undermine "morality" in the service. There was no further elaboration in the article, but the charge of "nationalism" in Soviet internal propaganda is taken to refer to nationalistic feelings shown by any of the minority groups in the Soviet Union. In this case, it is quite likely that reference was being made to national groups from the Baltic States, Caucasus and/or Central Asia, all of whom have strong nationalistic and religious feelings which the regime has not been able to erase. These minority groups are not well represented in the naval officer corps, but even isolated instances of disaffection—in these cases arising from religious/nationalistic motivations—would be of concern to the regime.

Of greater concern, of course, would be those conditions which affect a much broader sector of the naval officer corps, and which give rise to personal problems touching large numbers of Soviet naval officers. Most serious among these would seem to be excessive drinking and marital difficulties, problems which are frequently aggravated by duty in harsh climates and isolated areas, and which appear to be most prevalent in the Pacific and Northern Fleets.⁸

Soviet Navy authorities are certainly well aware of this situation, as well as the other conditions which are creating political, professional and personal problems within the officer corps. The question remains: What are they doing about it, to what extent are these measures succeeding, and how might the unsolved problems affect the performance of the Soviet naval officer in both peace and war?

FOOTNOTES

Chapter IV

1. Borzov, p. 37.

2. This necessarily broad and incomplete appraisal of the Soviet naval officer's character quite obviously but scratches the surface of what could be a lifelong study. Its purpose is only to provide a means of pointing up certain factors which, in the writer's opinion, motivate the Soviet naval officer and cause him to think and act as he does. Perhaps most significant of all is his ability and propensity for withdrawing into his shell and ignoring the world around him, completely unsympathetic to the problems of others. It will be noted that "Russian" and "Soviet" were used at various times in this appraisal. This was intentionally done, to pinpoint the traits of the Russian national, who represents well over half of the officer corps. Although the fairly authoritative sources indicated below were used in compiling this assessment, the writer must admit to introducing some personal views, based on his own observations and contacts with Russian nationals and Soviet citizens over several years. (Hart, p. 213-221; Predtechevskiy, v.p.; David and Vera Mace, *The Soviet Family* [Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1963], v.p.; Harrison E. Salisbury, *A New Russia?* [New York: Harper & Row, 1962], v.p.; Irving R. Levine, *Main Street, U.S.S.R.* [New York: Doubleday, 1959], v.p.)

3. Predtechevskiy, v.p. The divorce rate throughout the Soviet Union is quite high, despite the regime's efforts to curtail it. It is most difficult for an officer to obtain a divorce; he is not even permitted to make application for one, without the prior approval of his superior. For a few years after World War II, there were so many cases of divorce among officers (replacing uncultured wives with actresses, ballerinas, and educated and attractive secretaries), that official measures were taken to prevent a recurrence of this "big switch." The officer is no longer permitted to marry anyone he might choose; his intended must have at least a high school education, and she must meet with his "comrades' approval." (V.N. Alekseev, "Fundamentals of the Ideological Education of Naval Personnel," *Morskoy Sbornik*, June 1964, p. 16; Hart, p. 397; Mace, p. 41.)

4. Volosatov, v.p.; I.I. Guzenkov, "Pay More Attention to Young Officers," *Morskoy Sbornik*, January 1964, v.p.; "Torgovlya—delo vazhnoe i otvetstvennoe" (Trade—Important and Responsible Activity), *Kommunist Vooruzhennykh Sil* (Communist of the Armed Forces), September 1965, v.p. It was noted that most of the officers' wives find employment on the base, and that all of them participate in some form of volunteer civic activity. The reason for this emphasis on working wives would seem to be twofold: to supplement the family income of the young officer, and to keep the wives busy and occupied in the monotonous atmosphere of these remote bases. The majority of Soviet wives work full time, primarily because the family cannot live on the husband's salary alone, and navy wives (at least of junior officers) are probably not an exception in this regard. Personnel at these remote bases are believed to receive extra pay for duty in harsh climates, but this would probably not offset the wife's usual contribution to the family income.

5. Predtechevskiy, v.p. Excessive drinking is an extremely serious problem throughout the Soviet society, and it is not at all unusual to see men in a completely drunken stupor in public places. (Excessive drinking among women, on the other hand, is rare.) The writer has seen several Soviet naval officers (in uniform in public) in this condition. On one such occasion, a grossly inebriated junior officer was put aboard a commercial aircraft by his drunken companions (also navy junior officers); although there was a senior naval officer on the flight, completely aware of the condition of these men, he did nothing to correct their behavior.

6. It was noted that officers, and even the political organizations, were ill-equipped to deal with the problem of "caddish behavior toward women." The article therefore contained a dramatic and glowing description of true love, observing that the age of the young sailor is the time of love; further, that there is a widespread tendency in the navy to limit the sailors' opportunities for meeting young girls, that such measures are invariably harmful, and that it is necessary to create better conditions for such encounters. In some units, this problem is solved by arranging meetings with "sister units" for coeducational "evenings of recreation, visits to theaters and museums, exchanges of home art, and many others." (V.N. Alekseev, "Fundamentals of the Ideological Education of Naval Personnel," *Morskoy Sbornik*, June 1964, v.p.)

7. Predtechevskiy, p. 19.

8. The unmarried officer stationed at one of these remote bases is at an even greater disadvantage than his married shipmate. As noted, recreational facilities are extremely limited, and the opportunities for leave are infrequent. There are very few eligible females in these areas; in addition, the regime officially frowns on extramarital sex and appears to have prostitution well controlled. With the exception of a few possible vague references, the writer encountered no mention of the homosexuality which might be expected to result from such conditions. Despite this, it is his opinion that it is at least as serious in the Soviet Navy, as in any other navy; further, that it might well be more prevalent among junior officers, than among the enlisted men. This latter view is based on the fact that so many young officers have been cloistered in a strictly male environment since a very tender age, not unlike the school system in Great Britain, which many authorities feel has contributed to the high incidence of homosexuality within certain groups in that country.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

High commands, staffs and Party-political bodies are confronted with a serious task: to indoctrinate and train qualified military specialists—passionate patriots of the Soviet Fatherland, unquestionably loyal to the great cause of the Communist Party. In order to overcome successfully difficulties which are encountered, it is necessary to master Marxist-Leninist teachings, to perfect moral, political and military qualities, to believe firmly in victory, to possess initiative, resourcefulness, supervisory experience, and to have excellent military and technical training.

—Gulyaev, p. 20.

Political Evaluation. Quite obviously, Soviet authorities are well aware of the personnel problems which exist within the naval officer corps, as well as the conditions which are giving rise to them. In an effort to rectify these deficiencies, they have taken some concrete measures, but they are also counting heavily on party and Komsomol organizations to accomplish this through internal propaganda and ideological indoctrination. To a large extent, this reliance on the political organizations can be traced to the continued attribution of political or ideological significance to virtually every facet of navy life. This testimony to political control in the navy is worth noting. The Communist Party is no more prepared to relinquish this control, than it is ready to drop the reins of power in the Kremlin itself.

However, the character of warfare at sea has changed for the Soviet Navy, and with it, the role of the naval commander. He must now be given greater responsibility and authority within the unit which, in many respects, he only nominally led before. In the Soviet scheme of things, this implies responsibility and authority in both military and political matters: thus the "strengthening of the one-man management concept," and coincidentally, the increased emphasis on combining political and military education and training of officers at all levels, as well as the intensified recruitment of naval personnel into the ranks of the party and Komsomol. At the same time, efforts are being made to improve the image of the "zampolit" and to integrate him more closely

into the military organization to which he is attached. Finally, there is the campaign to encourage regular officers to work more closely with the political organizations in their units, and to seek their advice and assistance in all aspects of both service and private life.

The regime claims that the concept of "single command" is working well, but there is reason to believe that it has really enjoyed but limited success. The average regular officer still tends to concentrate on purely professional matters, content to leave ideology to the political organizations. He is probably a full or candidate member of the party now (or at least belongs to the Komsomol), but he did not necessarily join out of conviction; it may well have been the promise of advancement which provided the incentive, much like belonging to the "right club" in other societies. He knows and can recite all of the proper phrases, but he may be paying lip service, rather than demonstrating complete devotion to the principles of communism, in fact, he may be quite complacent about matters of politics and ideology. Finally, despite the improved image of the "zampolit," the regular officer continues to resent him and his interference in purely naval matters, even begrudging the time which the "zampolit" demands of him and his subordinates for ideological instruction—time which he feels could be better spent perfecting professional skills.

Although the average officer may thus lack "political maturity," according to the party's standards, he is loyal to the regime. The basis for this loyalty, however, is to be found in his patriotism and devotion to his homeland, the government of which is represented by the current regime. He is ready to go to the Motherland's defense, and if properly motivated, will do so quite effectively. In recognition of this fact, the authorities are exposing him to an intensive propaganda campaign which is designed to cultivate this patriotic spirit. Russian maritime traditions are being glorified, and increased publicity is being given to the role of the navy in "The Great Patriotic War" against Fascist Germany and Imperial Japan. The oath of enlistment (with its emphasis on allegiance to the Soviet people, Motherland and Government) and the various Armed Forces regulations are frequently referred to, as a constant reminder of his service responsibilities.

The Soviet naval officer's increased opportunities for contact with the West are a matter of concern to the regime. There is

always the possibility that he might become disaffected as a result of Western efforts at "ideological subversion." While there is relatively little likelihood that he might defect or be encouraged to engage in espionage for a foreign power, even a single incident would be of grave consequence. Therefore, his ideological indoctrination includes careful explanation of various domestic and foreign policy decisions taken by the Government, and every effort is made to develop in him an abhorrence of imperialism and the nations which his political instructors tell him are practicing it. There is a similar effort to develop in him a greater sense of responsibility with regard to security matters. He is well indoctrinated in this regard, but may be careless at times about disclosing innocent bits of information which might be of use to an enemy. If he has a serious shortcoming in this area, it is his relative disinterest in the political vigilance and security consciousness of his subordinates, matters which he feels are more the responsibility of the political organizations.

Professional Evaluation. As a professional, the Soviet naval officer also has his shortcomings, and in this area, navy authorities are taking more concrete measures to eliminate them. Foremost among these measures are the efforts to raise the level of his professional knowledge and practical experience. The curricula at all naval officer schools are being modernized to some extent, and a progressive postgraduate program is in being, designed to supplement the officer's basic knowledge at a relatively early point in his career. Emphasis is also being placed on lecture programs during off-duty hours, frequently based on the greatly expanded coverage of professional subjects appearing in *Morskoy Sbornik*. The goal is to bring the officer up-to-date on late developments in naval weaponry, equipment, operations and tactics, quite often basing this program on developments in foreign navies, particularly those of the U.S. and other NATO countries.

As a result of these efforts, all Soviet naval officers are now alleged to have a university education, with at least one fourth of them having had the benefit of postgraduate training as well. The average naval officer is probably generally familiar with late naval developments both at home and abroad, but his working knowledge is pretty well restricted to his own narrow field of specialization. Although not eliminated entirely on submarines and minor combatants, this problem of professional compartmentation is probably a great deal more prevalent aboard major surface ships.

Far more serious, it would seem, is the Soviet naval officer's lack of practical experience. This problem starts at the Higher Naval School, where the overloaded curriculum and limited facilities greatly restrict his practical training as a cadet in the most elementary of professional skills. The situation is only slightly better when he reports to his first ship as a junior officer. Having had little or no experience on board an operating combatant before, his period of personal adjustment is apt to be protracted. Moreover, he is assigned numerous collateral tasks (primarily associated with the ship's political organization), all of which detracts from the time available for mastering his primary duties. In many cases, he is given little opportunity to exercise personal responsibility on watch, or in any other key position aboard ship, and his practical development and advancement to more responsible billets are slowed accordingly. Eventually, he overcomes these shortcomings in practical experience, and as a commanding officer or department head, he is reasonably well qualified.

At times, the Soviet naval officer is slow to adopt new methods for doing things, making limited use of advanced equipment with which he may not be too familiar. This tendency is probably most prevalent among the more senior officers, but it is not necessarily limited to them. In time, of course, this attitude will almost certainly be overcome, particularly after there has been greater opportunity to exercise the new equipments and demonstrate their practical advantages under realistic operating conditions.

It is in this area of operational training that the Soviet naval officer has suffered most. Unlike his U.S. counterpart, he has not had the benefit of extensive operational experience since World War II, until very recently being confined to limited operational training, frequently under rather unrealistic conditions in or adjacent to home waters. This situation is changing, of course, with the emphasis on training exercises and fleet operations in most major ocean areas of the world. This still involves a relatively small segment of the navy, however, and the Soviet naval officer's lack of experience under realistic operating conditions will probably be a limiting factor for some time to come.

Equally as serious are the Soviet naval officer's shortcomings as a leader and a commander. The picture is probably not so serious as that painted in the Soviet naval press, but there can be little doubt that a very large segment of the officer corps shares certain undesirable qualities which Soviet authorities consider to constitute a lack of "operational maturity." Foremost among these is

the naval officer's reluctance to assume personal responsibility, which frequently manifests itself in a lack of initiative and decisiveness. Not uncommonly, the naval officer also exhibits a lack of self-discipline in his performance of duty, leading to such irresponsible acts as "formalism"—going through the motions for appearance's sake—deceit and even falsification of training and disciplinary records. To Soviet authorities, it should be noted, such shortcomings also show a lack of "political maturity," and they are a matter of grave concern to both navy and party leaders. In time, the Soviet naval officer may overcome these deficiencies in leadership and command ability, but not until he has reason to believe that initiative and complete honesty are really what the authorities expect of him. Despite their claims to the contrary, he knows that this is not always the case; that the naval officer who shows too much initiative, or is honest enough to admit shortcomings, may have more to fear from the regime than one who is less ambitious and candid.

Such undesirable traits on the part of the naval officer, needless to say, are frequently mirrored by his subordinates. Not only is he apt to be delinquent in this important aspect of personal leadership, but he also leaves much to be desired in direct dealings with his men. At one extreme is the officer—presumably very young and unsure of himself—who tends toward overfamiliarity with the enlisted personnel. At the other extreme—and far more prevalent in the Soviet Navy—is the officer who pays too little attention to his subordinates, or when he does deal with them directly, does so in a condescending or ruthless manner, frequently using the threat of punishment as his only means of getting results. This poor leadership ability in the Soviet naval officer probably stems in large measure from his long reliance on the political organizations to uphold discipline in the military. He will overcome this shortcoming only when the party gives him sufficient opportunity to exercise leadership without interference.

Personal Evaluation. As might be expected, the Soviet naval officer shows even less interest in subordinates once he gets ashore. The party, on the other hand, is vitally interested in their off-duty activities. It also takes a very active interest in the private life of the officer, whose personal problems might have an adverse effect on his performance and reliability. Such problems are receiving considerable attention from both the navy and the party, and in addition to the ever-present indoctrination sessions and internal propaganda, some concrete measures are being taken to rectify the conditions which create them. As an example, funds

have been earmarked, and the pressure is on, to improve living conditions, medical support, and recreational facilities at remote bases. Little actual progress appears to have been made, however, and it may be some time before conditions at these bases show appreciable improvement. In the meantime, morale in these isolated areas—primarily the Pacific and Northern Fleets—continues to suffer. Both the naval officer and his wife are accustomed to less than ideal living conditions, but after the relative luxury of duty in one of the larger cities, the austerity and harsh climate at some of these remote bases must come as quite a shock. Moreover, extremely crowded living conditions in communal quarters, plus the boredom of life in these areas and the long separations while the husband is at sea, may lead to infidelity and other marital difficulties. The failure rate of navy marriages is therefore believed to be quite high. Navy and party authorities frown on divorce, however, and if the officer's marriage proves to have been a mistake, there is little he can do but try to make the best of it.

The situation is no better for the unmarried officer at one of these remote bases. He is faced with many of the same problems as his married shipmate, but he also lacks suitable female companionship, and his leaves to the larger cities for recreation are infrequent. Although the Soviet naval press makes no direct reference to it, it is not unlikely that homosexuality becomes a problem among some of these officers.

Conditions at these remote bases also serve to aggravate the drinking problem in the Soviet Navy. Excessive drinking is widespread throughout the naval officer corps, but it has an adverse effect on the performance of a relatively small number of officers. On occasion, the naval officer might be at less than peak efficiency, as a result of heavy drinking, but he is usually fit for duty, the threat of disciplinary punishment and possible dismissal from the service serving to discourage too frequent overindulgence. As much as he drinks, the average naval officer is not what might be called an alcoholic, but there is no guarantee that he might not become one; nor is there any assurance that, while in a drunken state, he might not commit some imprudent act, such as talking carelessly about military matters.

An evaluation of the personal qualities of the Soviet naval officer would be incomplete without some mention of those traits of character which make him think and act as he does, frequently inconsistently and much unlike his U.S. counterpart. Previously

dealt with were the inferiority complex, apathy, suspicion and reserve which characterize a large percentage of Soviet naval officers, and which color their attitudes and actions in dealing with others. Perhaps as a result of these traits, but more likely due to the environment in which they have developed, they also tend to be selfish and self-centered. Such is apt to make the Soviet naval officer unconcerned about the problems of others, at times even ruthless and dishonest about protecting his own interests. There are those who believe that this character deficiency reflects the lack of religious upbringing, which the much-vaunted Communist code of ethics has failed to supplant. Whatever the reasons behind it, the fact remains that the Soviet naval officer frequently seems to withdraw into his own little shell, ignoring the world outside, confident in the belief that any means are justified, so long as his own ends are met. One cannot but wonder what effect this attitude might have in his interest in and loyalty to his shipmates.

The Officer's Impact on Soviet Navy Potential. In an effort to point up the Soviet naval officer's shortcomings, a rather bleak picture has been painted in the preceding pages, perhaps creating the impression that because of these shortcomings in the officer corps, the Soviet Navy is an impotent force. This is erroneous, of course.

It would be unrealistic to assume, for example, that the Soviet naval officer's lack of "political maturity" would have any appreciable effect on his performance of duty, particularly in a wartime situation. He must be considered devoted to his country and loyal to the regime, if only because the regime represents the power of his homeland. If past performance is any indication, he is likely to be at his best in defense of this homeland, but if properly motivated, he can be expected to make a creditable showing in an offensive situation as well.

As a general rule, the personal problems and shortcomings of the Soviet naval officer are not likely to have a serious effect on his performance of duty. He is personally ambitious and is not apt to allow his private life to interfere with the advancement of his career. There are, of course, exceptions to this rule. Moreover, there are some personal problems which are shared by relatively large numbers of Soviet naval officers, and which are of concern to navy authorities. In particular, the widespread tendency toward excessive drinking presents something of a threat, in that it could result in brief lapses of otherwise

tight security consciousness. Also, extreme marital difficulties, or threatened exposure for moral shortcomings, might conceivably prompt defection in isolated cases.

Of greater concern to navy leaders, however, are some rather serious professional shortcomings which could have a decided impact on the effectiveness of the Soviet Navy in both peace and war. First among these is the naval officer's lack of experience under realistic operating conditions. Next, there is the question of suitable "back-up" for officers in key billets, both for maximum effectiveness during extended operations, and also as replacements in the event of incapacity. Finally, there is the demonstrated reluctance on the part of the naval officer to assume responsibility and to exercise initiative and effective leadership. On the face of it, this last deficiency would seem to be a severe limiting factor in either a peacetime or wartime situation. It is worth noting, however, that the Soviet naval officer (like his army counterpart) demonstrated in World War II that these are shortcomings which can be overcome when necessity dictates.

Least tangible, but perhaps of greatest significance, is the hard-to-define change in demeanor which appears to be coming over the Soviet naval officer. The writer has perceived this change, particularly among the officers of the postwar generation, who quite suddenly have emerged with what can only be described as a "blue water look." In marked contrast to most of their seniors, there is an aura of professionalism about them. Moreover, they seem aware of their professional shortcomings, but are anxious and able to learn. These are the future leaders of the Soviet Navy—many of them commanding submarines and major surface combatants today—and despite their present shortcomings, they will probably be well equipped to assume that leadership when the time comes. The major obstacle standing in their way is the stifling effect of party control in the navy—the same factor which has impeded their personal and professional progress to date.

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APPENDIX I

TABLE OF EQUIVALENT SOVIET AND U.S. NAVY RANKS

SOVIET NAVY RANK ^a	U.S. NAVY RANK
Admiral of the Fleet of the U.S.S.R. ^b	Fleet Admiral
Admiral of the Fleet	Admiral
Admiral	Vice Admiral
Vice Admiral	Rear Admiral (Upper Half)
Rear Admiral	Rear Admiral (Lower Half)
Captain First Rank	Captain
Captain Second Rank	Commander
Captain Third Rank	Lieutenant Commander
Captain Lieutenant	Lieutenant
Senior Lieutenant	Lieutenant Junior Grade
Lieutenant	Ensign
Junior Lieutenant ^c	Midshipman (Passed)

^aSoviet Navy ranks listed above apply to officers of the line and line-engineering specialty; in the case of the latter, the rank is prefixed by the word "tekhnik" or "engineer," depending on the degree of education or experience of the officer; e.g., Engineer-Rear Admiral. Officers of other branches of the Navy (i.e., naval aviation, coastal artillery, supply, medical, administrative and judiciary) wear naval uniforms, but use army-type ranks.

^bThe rank of Admiral of the Fleet of the U.S.S.R. is a recently created one, currently held by the Commander in Chief of the Navy.

^cThe rank of Junior Lieutenant is not believed to be in general use at present, graduates of the Higher Naval Schools being commissioned directly as Lieutenants.

APPENDIX II

THE MILITARY OATH OF A SOVIET SERVICEMAN

I, a citizen of the U.S.S.R., entering the ranks of the Armed Forces, take the oath and solemnly swear to be an honest, brave, disciplined, vigilant fighting man, to safeguard military and government secrets, to fulfill unquestioningly all military regulations and orders of commanders and superiors.

I swear to study military matters conscientiously, to safeguard military and public property by all means, and to the last breath to be loyal to my People, to my Soviet Motherland, and to the Soviet Government.

I am always ready, on the order of the Soviet Government, to go to the defense of my Motherland, the U.S.S.R., and as a fighting man of the Armed Forces, I swear to defend her courageously, ably, with dignity and honor, not sparing my blood and life itself for the achievement of complete victory over her enemies.

If I should ever break this, my solemn oath, then let the stern penalty of Soviet law, and the universal hatred and contempt of the workers, befall me.^a

^aU.S.S.R. Ministry of Defense, *Ustav Vnutrennyy Sluzhby Vooruzhennykh Sil Soyuza S.S.R.* (Internal Regulations of the Armed Forces of the U.S.S.R.), (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1965), app. 2 to art. 66, p. 207.

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